CIGAR & SPIRITS

THE GENTLEMAN'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

MAY 2016

HENKE KELNER: THE MAN BEHIND DAVIDOFF

DRESS LIKE A GENTLEMAN
A LOOK AT MEN'S STYLE BOXES

FILL YOUR **BAR**
14 SPIRITS RATED

FOR YOUR HUMIDOR
27 CIGARS RATED

COVER STORY **SPIRITS INDUSTRY ICON**

JON TAFFER

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THE GENTLEMAN'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2016

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Cigar & Spirits is published bimonthly by Top Hat Media Group, Please send address changes to Cigar & Spirits, P.O. Box 37185 Boone, IA 50037-0185.
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For subscription inquiries or change of address: Cigar & Spirits, P.O. Box 37185, Boone, IA 50037-0185; (800) 542-1600 , Fax: (515) 433-1013.

Subscription rate is $19.99 for 6 issues; $32.99 for 12 issues. Canadian and foreign surface, add $6 extra per year payable in U.S. funds. Single copy price is $5.99. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for new subscriptions to begin. When changing address, give six weeks' notice and address label from latest copy as well as new address with zip code. Occasionally, we make our subscriber list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services that we believe would interest our readers. Please view our Privacy Policy at tophatmediagroup.com/privacypolicy.html.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40612608, Registration No. R126851765. Return undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: IMEX Global Solutions, P. O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2, CANADA.
Printed in the U.S.A. May 2016 Volume 6/Issue 2

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Allow No Other to Determine Your Destiny

THE FRONT COVER OF THIS ISSUE features a very special man; a self-made entrepreneur, innovator, motivator, and businessman- Jon Taffer.

Mr. Taffer is the creator of the popular show Bar Rescue on Spike TV. I've had the pleasure of getting to know Jon over the past 5 years, and during that time we have watched each other's companies grow and develop in our respective industries. Jon is a man I deeply respect, not only because of his accomplishments and business acumen, but how on a daily basis he does things not for himself but to enrich the lives of so many other people.

There is a certain panache I admire about the people in the cigar and spirits industries. There is so much history and culture embedded in the cigar industry with farmers who have been pioneering the artistry of tobacco for generations. Then, there are distillers such as the Nolet family with 325 years of passion, struggle, and success.

Across these industries we have overcome our share of critics, impossible obstacles, and even prohibition itself. Through these crises the industry leaders have stood tall and strong, fighting back despite the odds being against them.

For any vision, or dream you may have, in any spectrum of your life–whether it be for family, work, business, or life goals; it's important that you remember you are in charge of your own destiny and happiness.

The direction in which we lead our families, coworkers, friends and the people around us is controlled only by ourselves.

We often discuss the Cigar & Spirits lifestyle; part of this lifestyle means enjoying life and making it your own. To sit and enjoy a drink and cigar at the end of the day, rather it be with your peers at a favorite lounge, or in your man cave by yourself at home, is a God given right. It's the freedom to enjoy our lives the way we see fit, and to let no man control one's own destiny.

The next time you're enjoying your favorite cigar and/or spirit, take a moment to reflect on all the people throughout history whom have stood up against tyranny, despite all odds, in order to provide you the opportunity to enjoy the very item which you are enjoying in that moment.

A cigar and spirit is more than the sum of its parts, it is a symbol of freedom, a freedom for every man and woman to make their own destiny, especially here in America.

To all the men and women who control their destinies with their own hands, I raise a glass in your honor.

Cheers,

Lincoln B. Salazar

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DRESS LIKE A GENTLEMAN: A LOOK AT MEN'S STYLE BOXES

By **Dave Johnson**

SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST DECADE: Across all occupations and budgets, men are dressing better and they are realizing its importance. I personally had an almost Jedi awakening when my kids were born and I realized I needed to dress as an example for my kids. But I had a problem—a big problem: I had no idea where to start, or even if I could afford the clothes that I presumed I needed. Although I haven't arrived, I continue along the path to dressing better, and over the last couple of years I have significantly changed my wardrobe for the better.

THE FIRST SERVICE that helped me was Cladwell.com. Cladwell is a website that helps men and women build personalized, minimalistic wardrobes by highlighting the essential clothing needed for each season. They ask many questions about your style, comfort level, climate, and coloration, and then determine which clothes work best for you. They suggested my color palette is "deep winter" (dark colors), and my style is "casual guy." Good to know! It's an outstanding service and was a revelation in my personal journey. And for $7 a month, it's a steal.

But I realize that even Cladwell has its limits. Not every man has the time (or desire) to shop for the clothes he needs—including me. Besides, just knowing the right types and colors of clothing, I needed clothes that fit, which apparently is a constant battle with my body type. I personally hate shopping in stores, so I needed an alternative. On top of that, I had to factor in affordability since I'm not Tony Stark, and I have to be budget-conscious. Thankfully, the fashion gods had me covered: subscription clothing services.

Personally, I believe one of the best services to come out of this men's fashion renaissance has been that of online box subscriptions—and that is the focus of this article. These have been a great asset to the wardrobes of countless men, mine included. These services cater to men who desire to dress like a gentleman, but who might lack the knowledge, time, or the budget to do so. So I want to give an overview of some of the most worthwhile choices.

>> FiveFour

URBAN · DAPPER · CLUB
EST. 2015
>> Urban Dapper

>> Cladwell

>> Trunk Club

>> SprezzaBox

>> Fashion Stork

Chief among them is **Trunk Club**. Trunk Club's service is simple: at no charge, they connect you to a personal stylist to assess your needs and then send you a box of clothing. You only pay for the clothes you keep, and send back the rest, postage paid. Trunk Club is a fantastic service with clear pros and cons. The benefits are obvious: free stylist—and that alone is impressive. The main con is the price of their clothing. From their website, "Jeans are $170–$250 per pair, casual shirts are $100–$200 each, and sweaters are $100–$300 each." Ouch. In their defense, they have over eighty top brands, and they ship top quality clothing, so if that's in your budget, Trunk Club is the absolute best. If you can't swing that (like me), there are other great options.

Five Four's service tweaked the Trunk Club model and made it more affordable. You fill out a questionnaire about your sizes, color preferences, and style. Then, for $60 they send you in-house designed and curated clothing every month—you keep everything¬–at no additional charge. You will receive 2-3 items with every shipment, appropriate for the corresponding season. I was unsure how well this service would be for me, but after getting my first "box" (really just a bag), I was pleasantly surprised by the quality and styling of the clothes. I received two boxes worth of clothes, and in them were two Henley's, a t-shirt, jeans, and light jacket. I liked everything, and it all fit perfectly. For someone more budget-conscious, I think Five Four is not only an excellent value for your money, it's a fashionable choice.

My first exposure to **Fashion Stork** was from a video recommending their service. What really stuck out to me was not only their service, but their mission, which is to donate to families wanting to adopt. Their service is somewhat of a blend of the previous two suggestions: you pay $75, keep all your clothes, and you connect with a stylist who curates your clothes. In my box, I received a sweater, shirt and tie, and a note from my stylist to pair it with jeans to complete the outfit. I was really impressed by their service, professionalism, communication, and most importantly, the clothing they offer. With every box sold, they donate $1 to fund adoptions. As someone with friends who have adopted, this company really hits home.

In my search for subscription boxes, I found some companies doing things differently. **Urban Dapper**'s business is only ties. For $14 a month you get a stylish, high quality tie. The sample I received was a highly fashionable navy and white dotted tie. The value and quality here is wonderful, and if you wear ties a lot or just want to beef up your tie collection slowly and affordably, this is perfect.

"It has never been easier to dress better, and we don't have to break the bank to do it."

>> Scent Trunk

Touted as the "#1 Men's Subscription Box," SprezzaBox gives you a box of goodies worth over $100 for only $28 a month. You'll get items like ties, socks, grooming products, pocket squares, and other fashionable accessories. My SprezzaBox included a tie, pocket square, toothpaste, socks, and a shoe horn—each piece exuding quality. The value here is off the charts, and the quality and variety is really wonderful. Even their web store is great, selling all the items they put in the boxes, and offering them at competitive prices.

Lastly, Scent Trunk is fragrance-centered and at $18/month they send you three personalized fragrance samples based on a profile questionnaire. I have found this service really helpful, and they send scents I like all the time.

There are countless other services like these out there and is impossible to review them all in one article, but these few are some of the best. Men everywhere are dressing better because of these companies, myself included. It should go without saying, but I was really impressed by all these services, and if it means anything, I highly recommend all of them. Truly, it has never been easier to dress better, and we don't have to break the bank to do it.

timeless timekeeping

Unlike clothing, watches are accessories that can last for decades. The value you get from a watch; therefore, is immensely greater, even if the initial cost is higher. To complete your look, I suggest the Lum-Tec Combat series. This particular model is the B26, but anything in that series works wonderfully. Lum-Tec makes exceptional limited-edition, American-made watches with premium parts utilizing a friendly and approachable military feel. They are versatile and sensible with their classic styling and two included NATO straps, plus they work with many outfits. And, of course, the luminosity is very bright at night. The pictures are great, but it's even more impressive in person and has a legitimate "wow" factor. At $495 it isn't offensively expensive and has the build quality to last the rest of your life, and do so with timeless style.

Check out www.Lum-tec.com for more details.

GEAR GUIDE

THE EVERYDAY MESSENGER BAG BY PEAK DESIGN

OVER THE PAST YEAR I've easily gone through a half-dozen different bags to find something suitable for my everyday use. I've tried laptop backpacks, traditional briefcases, minimalist messenger bags, camera bags, and everything in between. Let's just say I was cautiously optimistic when Peak Design sent me their Everyday Messenger bag for review.

The Everyday Messenger by Peak Design is just what it sounds like. A messenger bag that can be used everyday. It has a large interior compartment, a hidden zippered compartment, and a front accessory pouch. Most notable though, is the "Look Ma, no hands!" (okay, one handed) patent-pending MagLatch™ closure. Through an ingenious use of elastic, magnets, and a claw like clipping mechanism, the bag can be easily opened and closed with one hand, without even looking, no matter how full you pack it–thanks to the laddered design of the latches themselves. It should be noted that the bag is also water resistant and features sealed zippers.

My daily gear–at minimum–includes a 12" Retina MacBook, external SSD, iPad Air, Pentax K-50 with 2 lenses, extra batteries, memory cards, charging cables, headphones, at least one notebook with pen, cigar cutter, lighter, and the occasional tri-pod...Plus my ever present coffee tumbler, travel humidor, and protein bars.

The Everyday Messenger has something that every other bag I have tried is lacking, true adaptability; thanks to the included origami-inspired geometric dividers which can be bent, folded and shaped to your gear, The Everyday Messenger is able to accommodate almost any variety of everyday essentials. My notepads, MacBook, and iPad all fit nicely in the rear access pocket, my K-50 and glass tucked safely away in the main compartment. Those aforementioned dividers- I can actually fold them over, effectively creating a second row of which to place additional items. In the front pocket, I can easily store my SSD drive, extra batteries, memory cards, and power adapter.

When it comes down to brass tacks, The Everyday Messenger is an exceptional bag that delivers on it's promise: To be a bag that you can use everyday, regardless of what you want to use it for. With a price tag of $249, it's no brainer. This is a bag that will last years thanks to the robust warranty and high quality construction. Get yours at **www.peakdesign.com**

CAPTURE PRO
BY PEAK DESIGN

An extra little gadget that Peak Design sent me along with the Everyday Messenger bag was their Capture Pro, a camera clip that allows you to rigidly carry any camera on a backpack strap, belt, or Everyday Messenger bag. I honestly wasn't sure how often I would use it, as the majority of my camera use is for planned shoots, but I figured "What the hell", strapped it on to my Everyday Messenger bag, and I saw the light. I found myself rarely putting my camera away inside the bag (except for travel), and I've probably doubled or tripled the number of images I take now on any given day. The Capture Pro is made out of Aluminum, and is extremely sturdy. Never once have I feared for the safety of my camera, and I'm able to access my camera with the push of a button. Kudos to Peak Design on the creation of this little gem, I'll be enjoying mine for years to come. Retails for $79.95 at **www.peakdesign.com**

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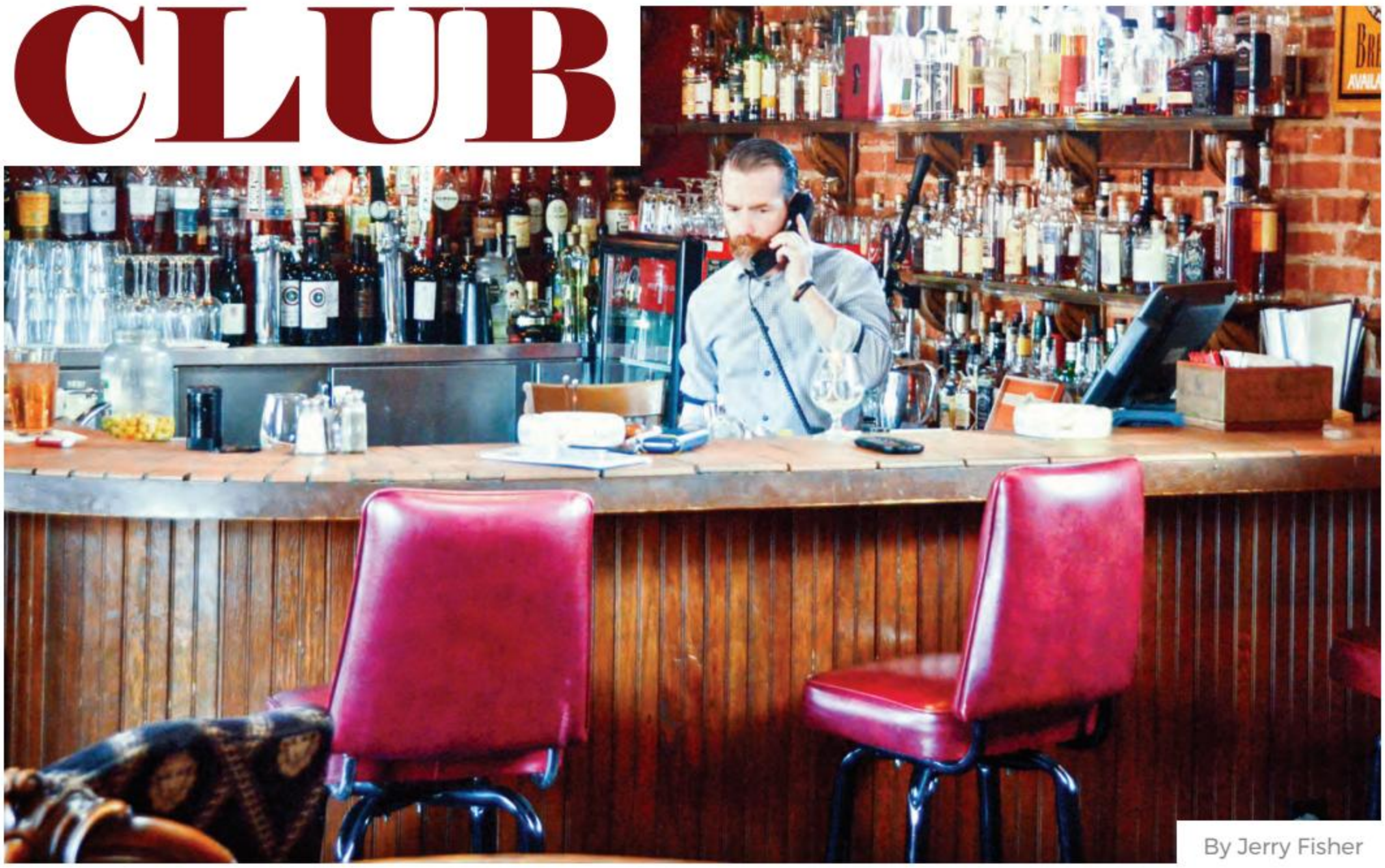

By Jerry Fisher

Even though today's cigar and cocktail culture evokes the classic sophistication of the Mad Men era, or the exclusivity of the Speakeasy experience, it is becoming increasingly rare to walk into a nicely appointed indoor lounge where comfortable seating, fine cigars, dry aged steaks and top shelf liquor are permanent fixtures. What is even rarer is finding all of those elements in a historic building that dates back to the Prohibition era political machine of "Boss" Tom Pendergast. On the third floor of the building at 931 Broadway in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, the Pendergast Club has all of those things for cigar and spirit lovers on a nightly basis.

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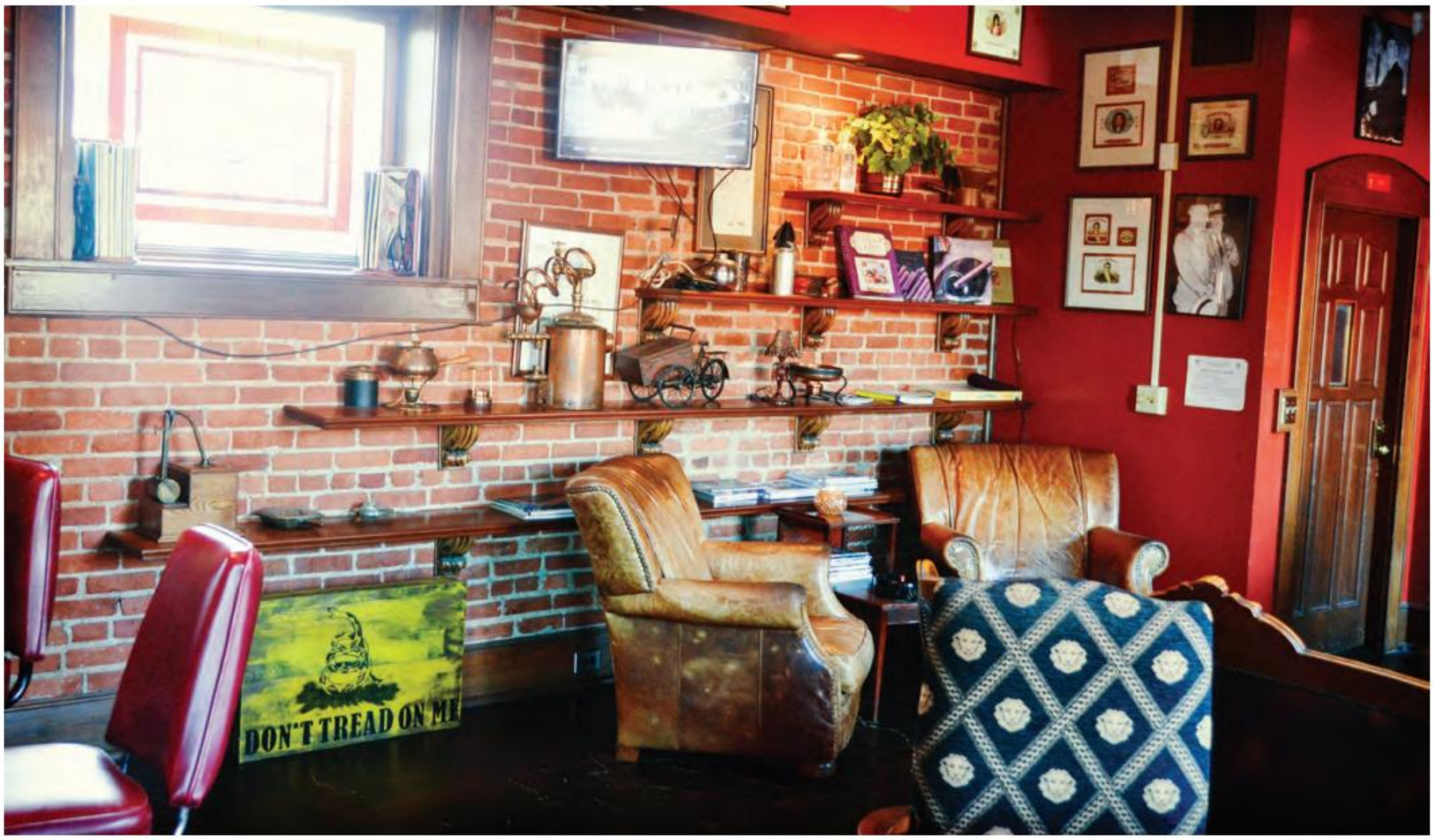
Sitting above one of Kansas City's most popular steakhouses, The Majestic Restaurant, the Pendergast Club has been a private cigar lounge since the late 90's. The building itself dates back to at least 1911 when it was The Fitzpatrick Building, opened by James A. Fitzpatrick with the support of "Big Jim" and "Boss Tom" Pendergast. The first floor was initially Fitzpatrick's Saloon, with a brothel on the second floor. Fitzpatrick's residence, which also served as a second office for Boss Tom, was on the top floor where the Pendergast Club is now. During Prohibition, the saloon moved from the main floor and became a basement speakeasy, and that space is now the Majestic's popular Jazz Club.

These days, the infamous third floor now opens around 4pm for its members and usually closes around midnight, depending on how business is going on any given evening. The speakeasy turned Jazz Club in the basement has live jazz five nights per week, and there is a pianist on the main floor in The Majestic. In the Pendergast Club, the vibe is relaxed and congenial, and the focus is a balance between famous Kansas City hospitality and keeping enough of the historic exclusivity to make sure that members "always have a seat waiting for them". The entire third floor is decorated with historic photos, paintings and advertisements. The exposed brick wall and hardwood floored Pendergast is a private cigar club, but that is more about keeping it comfortable with a smaller-than-capacity crowd at all times than anything else. While admission is at the discretion of management, any guest downstairs at The Majestic can inquire about an after-dinner visit, which is easily granted as long as space is available. Once inside, you'll be greeted at the bar or settle into a large leather sofa alongside longtime members, out of town visitors, service industry professionals, local politicians and athletes.

>> Kansas City's own J. Rieger & Co. was a casualty of prohibition but was revived in late 2014



WE REMEMBER WHEN WE CELEBRATED OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY...

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In addition to the cigar lounge, there is a game room and a dining room; both overlooking what was once the thriving garment district of downtown Kansas City. The game room is decorated with historic sports memorabilia and has several tables that are perfect for a game of cards. The dining room is modestly decorated, with the emphasis on the long wooden table and wall of windows overlooking Broadway Boulevard. The minimalist setting makes it easy to imagine that the room looks exactly as it did when Fitzpatrick and Pendergast held their private business meetings and poker parties. Both of those spaces are now available for hosting private events. If you are in town with a group for a local convention, entertaining clients, or just a local cigar lover wanting a place where you and your friends can enjoy a steak with your stogie, arrangements can be made through the restaurant to host your dinner upstairs in The Pendergast Club. Cigar smoking is welcome, and encouraged throughout the third floor, which has had 21st century smoke ventilation and filtration added to the space. There is always a cutter and lighter available at the bar, but if you need an upgrade or an extra of your own there is a large selection of Kansas City's own Xikar, Inc. lighters and cutters available for sale.

When it comes to cigars, members and visitors are welcome to bring in their own favorites, and members enjoy the benefit of storing any surplus in the Pendergast's walk-in humidor. The selection for sale is not huge, but it covers all of the bases from classic favorites to newer production sticks. They have several offerings from the Fuente family, including 858's and Hemingway Short Story's. There are also cigars from Avo, Casa Magna, the Liga Privada Series from Drew Estate, Davidoff, Romeo y Julieta, Oliva, Tatuaje and Aroma de Cuba. The range of strength, body and flavor in the Pendergast Club's humidor is a great fit for their selection of spirits.

Upon entering the club, after passing a painting of the notorious Boss Tom, much of the time you will be greeted by local bartender Kenny Cohrs, who is there to help guide your decision on the huge variety of premium spirits. While they are selling more and more beer these days, as it becomes increasingly popular, the majority of sales at the Pendergast's bar are still made up of Scotch, Rye and Bourbon whiskeys. For Scotch enthusiasts, The Pendergast stocks the entire Balvenie and Laphroaig lines. All of the usual top shelf bourbon and rye offerings are available, and they are particularly proud to serve history in a glass by stocking spirits from Kansas City's own J. Rieger & Co. The brand was a casualty of prohibition, and was revived in late 2014 when the original recipe was used to produce their whiskey. Since then, both vodka and gin have been added to production. Any visitor to The Pendergast Club would do well to enjoy a locally produced pre-Prohibition spirit in a building where Prohibition was effectively ignored. Even though the classic cigar-friendly

When it comes to cigars, members and visitors are welcome to bring in their own favorites, and members enjoy the benefit of storing any surplus in the Pendergast's walk-in humidor.

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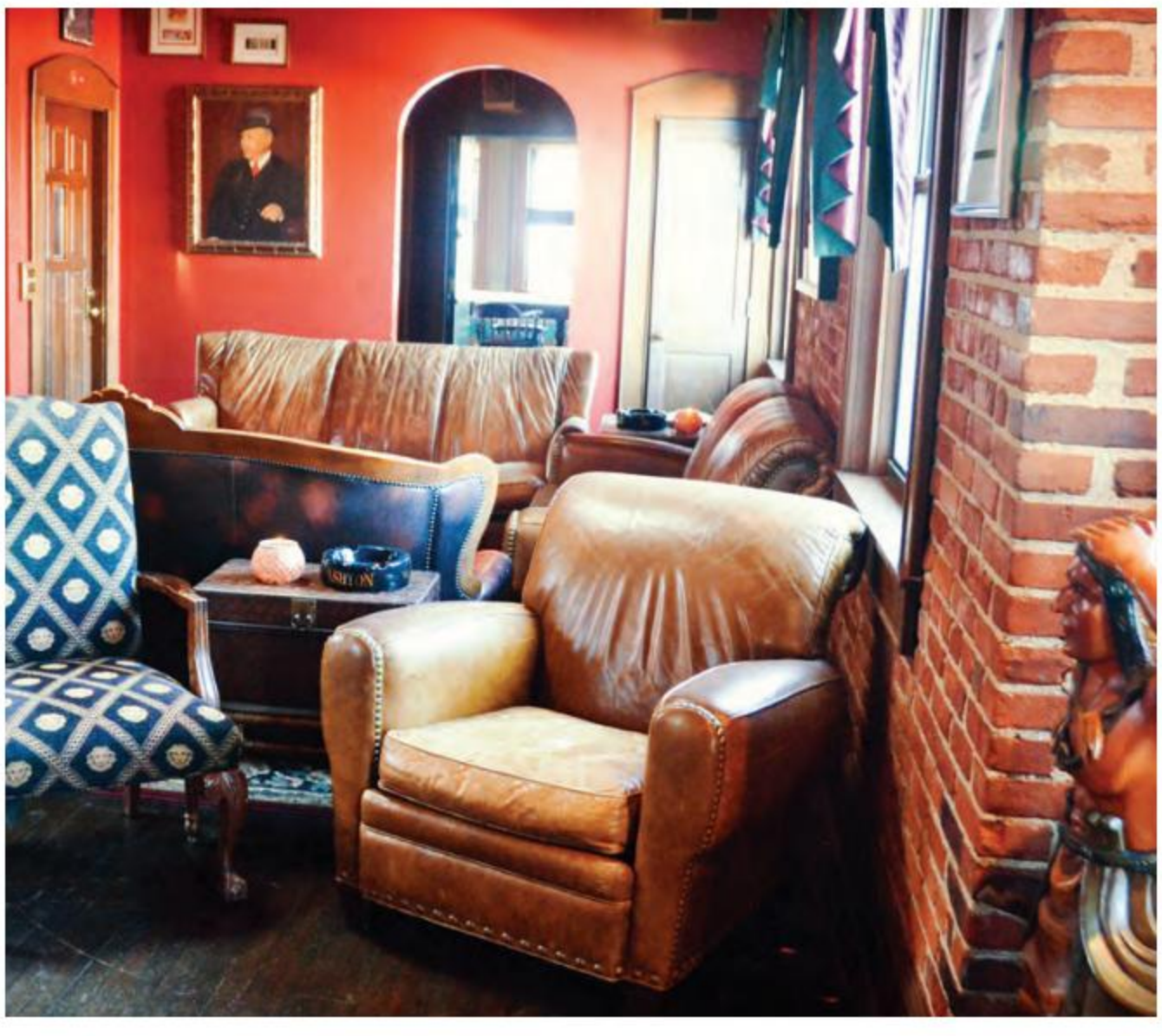
For a steakhouse, there is a great variety to choose from, but some popular highlights are crab cakes, beer battered pork chops, New Zealand lamb chops, and of course a wide variety of dry aged steaks.



spirits take center stage, the bar staff has an array of fresh fruits for juicing and mixers to make just about anything a guest might request. Whether a guest is a novice or a long time aficionado, the staff is invested in suggesting a cigar to match your drink or vice versa. One benefit to membership is the calendar of special events, including cigar and whiskey or cigar and agave pairings, as well as visits from brand ambassadors.

A colorful history and the very best tobacco and alcohol are generally enough to keep any enthusiast happy, but it wouldn't be Kansas City without offering the next level of quality and hospitality. In short, having one of the most popular Kansas City steakhouses right downstairs has its advantages. Whether relaxing at the bar or reclining into leather cushions, the entire Majestic Steakhouse menu is available in the Pendergast Club during regular kitchen hours and can be delivered up the two long flights of steps right to you. For a steakhouse, there is a great variety to choose from, but some popular highlights are crab cakes, beer battered pork chops, New Zealand lamb chops, and of course a wide variety of dry aged steaks; from an 8oz pepper encrusted filet to a huge 24oz porterhouse. Fresh, local and seasonal ingredients are important components of fine dining in Kansas City, and to that end The Majestic sources produce and meat from local producers at Thane Palmberg Farm, Goode Acres Farm, KC Buffalo Co. and Arrowhead Specialty Meats.

Kansas City is subject to the same tightening tobacco laws, food and drink trends, fads, fears and marketing as any other town in America. Some clubs and restaurants change with the times either by choice or necessity. What makes the club truly unique is a timeless hospitality combined with the creature comforts and ease of an earlier era. The goal isn't for it to be the most popular destination in town, and it isn't an option to rest on its laurels as the only place like it in town. The Pendergast Club is there to consistently deliver the highest level of what Jordan Carver, General Manager of The Majestic, describes as "Quintessential Kansas City...steaks, whiskey, cigars and jazz".

Jerry Fisher is an avid cigar smoker and reviewer. His love of premium cigars is matched only by his affinity for great food and strong coffee. You can follow him on Instagram @Zeemanb

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PSyKO SEVEN

THE V CUT SMOKE SHOP & LOUNGE

BY: PAUL O'BRIEN

Cruising West along Melrose Avenue, the trend center of the universe, you'll hit a pair of landmarks that have anchored the Fairfax District for decades: the Fred Segal clothing shops, and the Hollywood Improv. Los Angeles cigar lovers need only walk a few feet past the world famous comedy club to step into a landmark of their own. The V Cut Cigar Lounge has been serving up premium handmade cigars since the tail end of the 90s cigar boom; today, they're preparing to celebrate their 20th anniversary next summer.

Partying along with owner Taz Ahmadi will be a dedicated and diverse group of smokers. Over the years, the open and cordial atmosphere the Ahmadi family has cultivated here has won them the loyalty of customers representative of one of the most culturally diverse cities in America. On any given day, white, African American, Asian and Arab "brothers and sisters of the leaf" saunter in for a quick business meeting, a lengthy laptop screenwriting session, or a competitive game of backgammon. Tonight, a young group of yarmulke-clad teachers from the local Jewish school smoke Tatuajes on the patio and talk NBA basketball.

The space is as comfortable and unpretentious as its clientele. The floor is polished concrete. A pair of leather chairs, several couches, and café-style seating make the space modular enough to accommodate any size group. 25-foot ceilings keep the smoke at a nice distance no matter how big of a crowd is gathered around the game on TV. On cigar tasting event nights–which happen about once a month–you can enjoy the live band, hors d'oeuvres and a bar (the only time the lounge serves alcohol).

Featuring an array of accessories, from cutters ("V" and otherwise) and Boveda humidification packs, to desktop humidors and exclusive lighters from S.T. DuPont, The V Cut has what you need. But as is the case with any great lounge, the walk-in humidor is the star of this Hollywood story. Industry luminaries like Arturo Fuente, Padron, and the aforementioned Tatuaje command ample real estate on these shelves, alongside a well-curated selection of boutique lines from RomaCraft, Illusione, Caldwell, D'Croissier, Avo and many, many more.

If coffee and cigars is your thing, or you fancy a bite to eat, the family operates the V Café right next door, as well as a juice bar on the corner. Technology buff bonus- The Wi-Fi is fast and free.

Yes, you may spot a celebrity client or two; professional athletes visiting from out of town to shoot a commercial or negotiate a new deal always seem to find the place. The proximity to the Improv means that if your favorite comic smokes a cigar now and then, he'll find his way in. They come back because the savvy regulars know how to give fame its berth, and the staff is expert at rustling up something for every palate, from the daily smoke to the more exotic request.

The V Cut is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and on Sundays from Noon to 8 p.m.

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THE BOURBON REVIVAL: *It's Back And Better Than Ever*

By Samantha Dobson

AFTER SPENDING A FEW DECADES IN THE SHADOWS cast by the likes of vodka and tequila, America's only native spirit is finally making a comeback. With deep southern roots and a history of backwoods bootlegging, bourbon struggled with a less sophisticated identity compared to that of other spirits. However, as all things retro eventually come back into style, the bourbon industry is once again booming. This bourbon revival coincides with a growing popularity of craft distillation and cocktail culture, resulting in some innovative ways to enjoy that subtly sweet corn whiskey.

>> While many bourbon enthusiasts enjoy vintage or original recipes, the taste for something new is growing and so is the craft bourbon trend.

In its early days, bourbon was swigged straight from the bottle, but that harsh hooch our gun-slinging forefathers were tippling is a thing of the past. As distillation techniques have sophisticated and evolved over the years, the quality of spirits has reached a level worthy of sip and savor. Much like its whiskey counterparts, bourbon has developed a more refined variety of flavors and aromas. Meanwhile, quality has only continued to improve in this booming era of craft and micro-distilleries.

While many bourbon enthusiasts enjoy vintage or original recipes, the taste for something new is growing and so is the craft bourbon trend. Micro-distilleries are popping up not only in Kentucky, where 95 percent of all bourbon is distilled, but all across the country. These small-batch and single barrel distillers are crafting new premium bourbons with artisan methods. These craft distillers pride themselves on providing a quality product by using only organic, locally sourced ingredients or GMO- free Indian corns and limestone-rich water. When it comes to handcrafted bourbon, quality comes down to those little details.

Bourbon hasn't experienced this much love in decades, and the surge in small batch and single barrel brands may be to thank. According to the Kentucky Distillers' Association, bourbon production has increased more than 170 percent since 1999. This growth is contributed to the rise in craft brands and distilleries. In Kentucky alone, the number of state-licensed distilling companies grew from 10 to over 30 in just three years, according to the Kentucky Distillers' Association's 2014 Economic Impact Study. That number continues to grow as start-up craft distilleries set up shop across the country.

Just as bourbon production has evolved, so has the way we consume bourbon. Bartenders have long been swapping other whiskies for bourbon in classic cocktails, but as more Americans acquire a taste for bourbon we are seeing increased variety in our whiskey cocktails. Long gone is the era of Cosmos and Sex on the Beach [ed note: About time!]. Bourbon, and whiskey in general, has bounced back just in time for the modern craft cocktail culture.

These days, there's more to a bourbon cocktail than a Manhattan or a whiskey sour. Craft cocktails include unique ingredients and creative combinations, and bourbon cocktails are no exception. Thanks to the aging process in charred oak barrels, bourbon has a lot of character, making it the perfect base for creative cocktails. Bourbon muddled with exotic fruit, garnished with organic herbs, or flavored with unique bitters can be found on menus in both cocktail lounges and trendy restaurants. If artisan cocktails aren't enough, food bloggers and TV chefs are whipping up recipes for bourbon floats and milkshakes that are to die for.

The recent upward trend in bourbon can be contributed to many things, but perhaps the biggest driving force behind the bourbon resurgence is authenticity. Bourbon is exclusively homegrown and plays a large part in our nation's history. Along with baseball and apple pie, bourbon is about as American as it gets. In 2014, bourbon production reached 1.3 million barrels, the highest mark since 1970. As bourbon production and consumption continues to grow, the bourbon revival shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

FEATURED COCKTAILS

THE SEELBACH

This rather unknown classic is named after the Louisville, Kentucky hotel where it was created in 1917. The Seelbach cocktail was all but forgotten during the dry years of prohibition, but was brought back to life by a hotel manager in 1995. The Seelbach offers subtly sweet notes from the bourbon and orange liqueur, balanced by the spice of bitters and a dry yet refreshing lift from the champagne.

- 1 ounce bourbon
- ½ ounce orange flavored liqueur
- 7 dashes Angostura bitters
- 7 dashes Peychaud's bitters
- Champagne

Pour bourbon, orange liqueur, and bitters into a mixing glass over ice and stir. Strain into a chilled flute and top with champagne. Garnish with a lemon twist.

THE BOULEVARDIER

A close relative to the Negroni cocktail, the Boulevardier calls for bourbon instead of gin. The drink dates back to 1927 Paris, where it was featured in The Boulevardier magazine and Harry McElhone's book, "Barflies and Cocktails". The Boulevardier is the perfect balance between sweet and bitter to make a rich and complex cocktail.

- 1 ½ ounces bourbon
- 1 ounce Campari
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth

Pour ingredients into a mixing glass over ice and stir. Strain into a chilled glass and garnish with an orange slice.

>> The Boulevardier is the perfect balance between sweet and bitter to make a rich and complex cocktail

>> The Vanilla Bean Bourbon Milkshake

BOURBON LIFT

This fizzy concoction is a bourbon fan favorite at Hard Water in San Francisco, where it was created by bar manager, Eric Adkins. Bourbon and coffee liqueur go hand-in-hand in this deliciously sweet cocktail. The Bourbon Lift combines a light and airy froth with a rich and creamy base to give the taste buds a real treat.

- 1¼ ounces bourbon
- ¼ ounce orgeat
- ¼ ounce heavy cream
- ¼ coffee liqueur
- Soda water

Combine bourbon, or geat, heavy cream, and coffee liqueur in a shaker with ice and shake. Strain into a glass and stir while slowly adding the soda to achieve froth. Let sit for 20 seconds and add an ounce more soda water to lift the head. Serve with a straw.

VANILLA BEAN BOURBON MILKSHAKE

Make no mistake, this is not your kid's milkshake. Celebrity chef, Bobby Flay's boozy milkshake combines the rich, sweet flavors of vanilla and bourbon to keep your taste buds wanting more. With this delicious creamy blend, you'll want to skip dinner and go straight for dessert.

- 1 ounce bourbon
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 1 ¾ cups vanilla ice cream
- Seeds scraped from¼ vanilla bean

Combine bourbon, milk, and vanilla bean seeds in a blender for 5 seconds. Add ice cream and blend until smooth.

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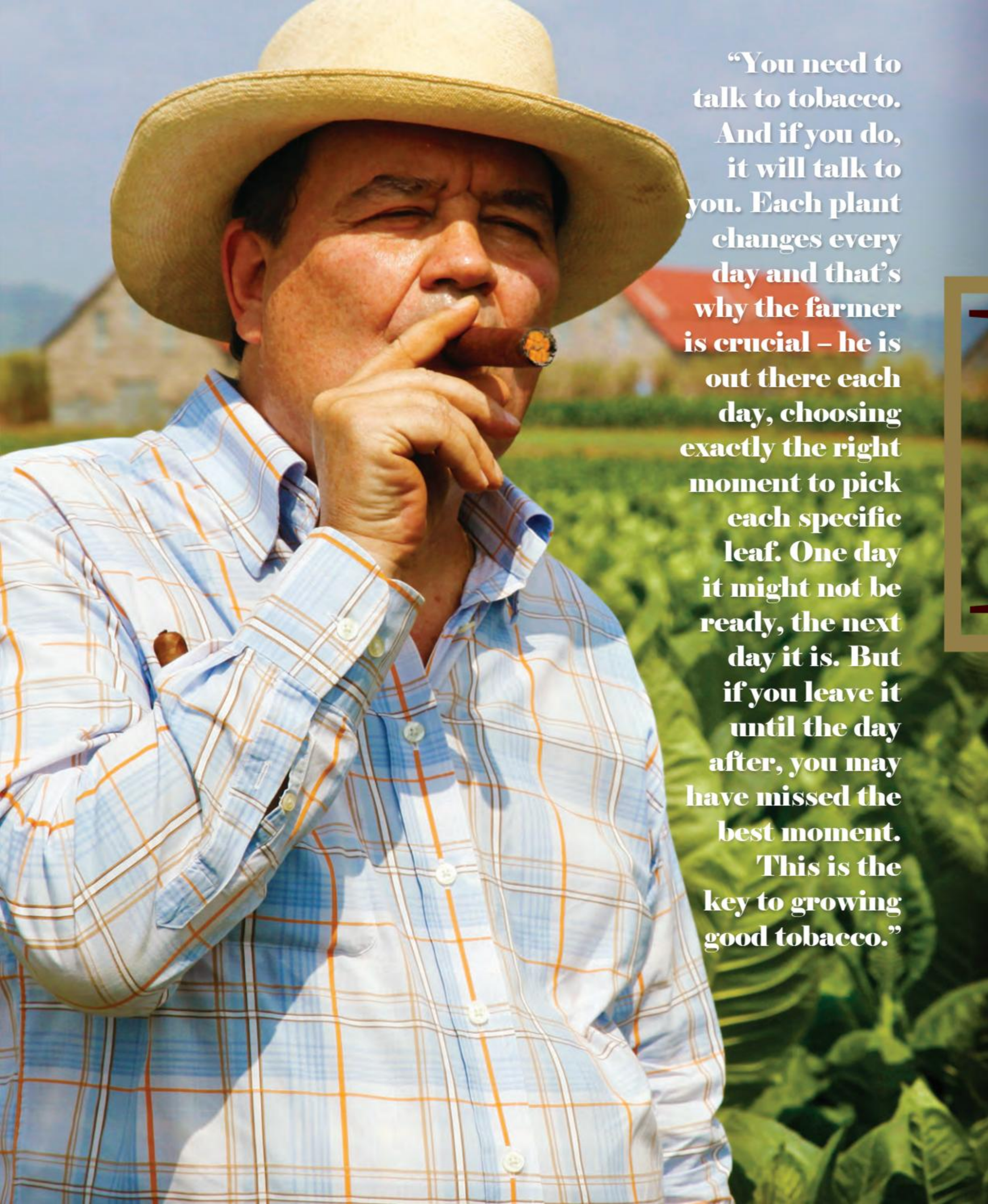
INDUSTRY LEGEND: HENKE KELNER

Some people need no introduction. At a VIP gathering in London's Davidoff store, Cigar & Spirits Magazine writer Nick Hammond meets a legend of the industry...

By Nick Hammond

>> Henke Kelner is a remarkable man, untouched by cigar fame and one imagines, the same character at work as at play.



"You need to talk to tobacco. And if you do, it will talk to you. Each plant changes every day and that's why the farmer is crucial – he is out there each day, choosing exactly the right moment to pick each specific leaf. One day it might not be ready, the next day it is. But if you leave it until the day after, you may have missed the best moment. This is the key to growing good tobacco."

He has a twinkle in his eye, and smoke on the brain.

HE'S THE MAN BEHIND A MILLION CIGARS; the blender of a generation of puros. Henke Kelner gives a trademark chuckle, takes a draw on his Churchill and embarks on another tale from a lifetime in tobacco. This is a man who can talk.

I'm at the Davidoff store in St James's Street, London, and around us, staff are simultaneously shutting up shop for the day, and setting up the shop for the evening.

Though we started our discussion in the afternoon while shoppers browsed and bought from Edward and Eddie Sahakian's walk-in humidor, the shop is eventually closed, the evening event prepared for and guests begin to arrive – and still Mr. Kelner shows no sign of ending his fascinating ramble around the world of the hand rolled cigar.

Laughter is never far from his lips and nor is his beloved cigar. By now he is polishing off his chosen afternoon stick – a Winston Churchill, Churchill no less – and Henke's colleague, the lovely Stefania, is trying to make eye contact with him to let him know it's time to move on. The twinkle in his eye tells he's having none of it. In his good, but heavily accented English, he's in the middle of a story about his six children.

For those of you who are unfamiliar, Henke Kelner is the Steven Spielberg of the cigar industry; an A-lister, with blockbuster after blockbuster to his name. For the last 30 plus years, he's been the man behind Davidoff, owned by Oettinger Davidoff.

He set up his own factory in his native Dominican Republic (Tabadom) in 1984, just in time to impress Oettinger officials looking for an alternative to dealing with the Cubans for cigar manufacture. He's never looked back.

It made eventual sense to sell Tabadom lock, stock and cigar bale to Oettinger and even then, Henke stayed on to mastermind the blends, tobacco inventory and direction; aided, as always by his trusty lieutenants Eladio Diaz (blends and quality control) and Manuel Peralta (genetics and agronomy).

Just recently, he's taken a step back from the front line for the first time and has now embarked on an ambassadorial role – which chimes nicely with the reason he's here tonight; to launch the new Davidoff Winston Churchill line.

Also present is Randolph Churchill, Winston's Great Grandson, who acted as wing-man to Henke for a discussion about the legendary former British Prime Minister.

But before that, Henke treated a small number of invited guests to a window into his world; accompanied by a hand drawn flipchart detailing such things as the different tasting sections of the human tongue and the growing plants and seasons crucial to cigar tobacco. He talked for more than an hour about his abiding passion.

"I'm doing this in 11 countries in the next four weeks," he chuckles to me during our discussion, "And I love to see new places, although it can get tiring. I have three free days in London? What should I do?"

I'm happy to advise the good man, but it's him I want to talk about. I have to keep steering the conversation back on point as he wanders off in a myriad of directions, peppered with incredible facts and figures on the problems–and joys–of growing and making fine cigars around the world.

"Did you know there are 10,000 tobacco seeds in one gram?" he queries. "In 100-110 days, the plant goes from seedling to fully grown, maybe eight or nine feet tall. You can stand in the plantation and hear them grow!" Another hearty chuckle.

"You need to talk to tobacco. And if you do, it will talk to you. Each plant changes every day and that's why the farmer is crucial – he is out there each day, choosing exactly the right moment to pick each specific leaf. One day it might not be ready, the next day it is. But if you leave it until the day after, you may have missed the best moment. This is the key to growing good tobacco" states Kelner.

It's an insight into the intricacies of growing the leaf that we so often take for granted.

"There's a linear assimilation on the palate with Estelí and Jalapa leaves," he continues, moving onto Davidoff's successful foray into Nicaraguan leaf with its Davidoff Nicaragua line. "The ligero is very powerful, so we only used 10% Estelí in the Nicaragua blend."

I hope you're getting a flavour of what it's like to spend some quality time with this instantly likeable man; it's an education, a lifetime of knowledge pepper-blasted at you in a fusillade of information.

"My everyday cigar?" he muses, finishing the Churchill. "I do not like big cigars generally and I don't have time to smoke them in my office. I like something not too strong in the morning, perhaps a Davidoff 2000. I'll perhaps have a Special R in the afternoon. If I have time, I enjoy the Davidoff Nicaragua Diademas. To drink? I enjoy a rum, black coffee or I love Scotch. The Triple Cask Balvenie is a favourite."

Stefania eventually succeeds in wrestling him away and the evening event begins, guests enjoying canapés and Champagne, but Henke sidles back to my side before long and this time he's onto Bourbon.

"You know they make it in Texas?" he enquires quietly. "I was down there and got to educate myself a little." With a soft chuckle, he continues "There's an awful lot of moonshine there too!"

Stefania once again subtly steers him to centre stage where he faultlessly begins his description of this new line of cigars; the blend based around Churchill's indomitable spirit; "Sophisticated, with a fiery nature!"

It's a presentation he's already given scores of times, I'm sure, but it still sounds like the first, his boyish enthusiasm warming the room.

Henke Kelner is a remarkable man, untouched by cigar fame and one imagines, the same character at work as at play. It's a privilege to spend a few hours with him and absorb just a tiny fraction of the knowledge he imparts with every casual aside.

Catch him wherever you can. This is cigar magic.

BORN IN SANTIAGO DE LOS CABALLEROS, Dominican Republic, in 1945, Hendrik 'Henke' Kelner started work in tobacco in 1969 at the Compañía Anónima Tabacalera factory and formed his famous Tabadom facility in 1989. Oettinger Davidoff first used his services in 1989 and he has been making their cigars – as well as those for the likes of Cusano, Avo and Ashton - ever since. Eventually Oettinger Davidoff bought Tabadom in its entirety. Hamlet Espinal has recently been named as Henke's replacement as General Manager and Henke has moved into an ambassadorial role, travelling the world and explaining the processes and people behind the brand. He remains Vice Chairman of the Tabadom board.

YOUR RIGHTS
ARE GOING UP IN FLAMES

"Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness." Unfortunately, these basic American rights are under constant attack – especially when it comes to enjoying a fine cigar! Overreaching smoking bans and overzealous taxation continues to be imposed on cigar enthusiasts across America. Additionally, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration could impose regulations which would devastate the premium cigar industry and your ability to enjoy fine cigars.

It's Time To Fight The Fire!

Visit www.CigarRights.org for More Information & Become a CRA Member.

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BETTING 101

BETTING THE PONIES REQUIRES SOME SKILL, BUT ODDS ARE ON YOU TO LEARN HOW WITH A BIT OF PERSEVERANCE.

By Sarah E. Coleman

Photo Courtesy Of Icatnews / Shutterstock.com

While attending the races is exhilarating in its own right, being able to bet the ponies makes the day even more exiting. You don't need to bet the house to have fun; the minimum bet for straight wagers at most tracks is only $2. The one thing to remember when you're wagering, however, is that you usually need to bet money to make money.

There is no "correct" way to handicap, or predict the outcome of, horse races; some people rely on a horse's past performances, some watch the horses in the paddock prior to the race and some rely solely on a racehorse's pedigree. While no method is foolproof, there is one tool that will provide you with additional knowledge to be able to make an educated wager: a racing form.

While a bit more complicated than simply choosing the horse with the best name (though this has been known to elicit a lot of laughs as the horses come down the stretch), the ability to read and decipher a racing form will improve your chances of making a winning wager.

HOW TO READ A TRACK PROGRAM

If you've never seen a race-day program, it can look a little like gibberish, with all sorts of numbers and lingo. But it's worthwhile to learn how to read one; it has statistics and history on all the horses that will run that day. If you plan on betting the ponies during your next trip to the track, it can be helpful to check out Equibase, the company that creates all race-day programs, for an interactive guide before you go.

SOME KEY TERMS TO LOOK AT WHEN READING THE TRACK PROGRAM:

The level of race the horses have been running. There are four race classes: maiden, claiming, allowance and stakes. The higher up in class you go, the more purse money is offered, with stakes being the highest.

While horses move up and down in class during the racing season, if you notice that this is the first race in a higher class for a horse you like, you might be wise to hold your bet as he may be outclassed by horses who have been performing in these races all year.

JOCKEY. The jockey's performance history will also be in the program. If he consistently rides horses that come in first, second or third, it's a pretty good indicator that the jock has talent. You will also be able to see the history of the jockey with that particular horse; if they have done well together in the past, they might make a repeat performance.

PAST PERFORMANCE ON TRACK SURFACE TYPE. Different racetracks offer different surfaces on which the horses run; these can include all-natural dirt and grass, or artificial polytrack. The program will tell you each horse's past performance on the different types of tracks; if a horse is running on a new-to-him surface, you may not want to wager he will win on a new surface.

ODDS: Every horse in every race will be listed with his odds of winning next to his name (updated odds will also be available at the track). The "favorite" horse, meaning the one expected to win, will have the lowest odds. If you're looking for an easy way to handicap with a good chance for a (small) financial return, bet the race favorite to show.

PLACING A BET IS NOT INTIMIDATING, BUT YOU WILL NEED TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE WHEN YOU GET TO THE COUNTER.

BETTING VARIATIONS

There are two basic options when betting: straight wagers and exotic wagers. Straight wagers are the easiest for a novice bettor to place; you bet only one horse. If you bet a horse to "**win**," you're betting that the horse will come in first place; you only collect money if the horse wins. If you bet a horse to "**place**," you're betting that the horse will come in first or second. If he does either of these, you collect a payout. Payout for a place bet is less than a win wager, but you will be able to cash in if your horse comes home in the two top spots.

A "**show**" bet means that you are betting that the horse you like will come in first, second or third. Here you have a higher chance of winning, but the payout will be lower than a win or place bet. The minimum bet at most tracks for a straight wager is $2.

If you bet a horse "**across the board**," you're betting one horse to win, place AND show. Essentially three bets in one, you will generally pay $6 for this wager. If your chosen horse wins, you get the win, place and show money; if he comes in second, you get the place and show money; if he comes in third, you get the show money only. These bets, while tempting, are not generally a good wager because they are more expensive to place, with less potential for profit.

Exotic wagers are more complicated and allow for multiple bets on multiple horses in one wager. These bets are typically more difficult to win, and more expensive to place, but the payout is much greater. These bets require more skill in handicapping horses than simple, straight bets.

-**Exacta:** The easiest of exotic wagers, you're betting on two horses to come in first and second in an exact order. For example, if you placed a $2 exacta on horses 4 and 6, you can only collect if the number 4 horse wins and the number 6 horse comes in second. The payout for an exacta can be quite lucrative. There is an option to "box" your exacta bet, which means the two horses you chose can finish in either order in the top two spots and you win. Boxing an exacta costs twice as much as a straight exacta bet.

-**Trifecta:** In a trifecta, you bet that three horses will finish in first, second and third in an exact order. You can box your trifecta so that you will win if your three chosen horses come in in any order. Boxing will increase the cost of the bet because there are so many combinations.

-**Superfecta:** In a superfecta, you bet that four horses will finish in places one through four in an exact order. You can also box a superfecta. The minimum bet on a superfecta is usually 10 cents, so this is a bet many people place.

PLACING YOUR BET

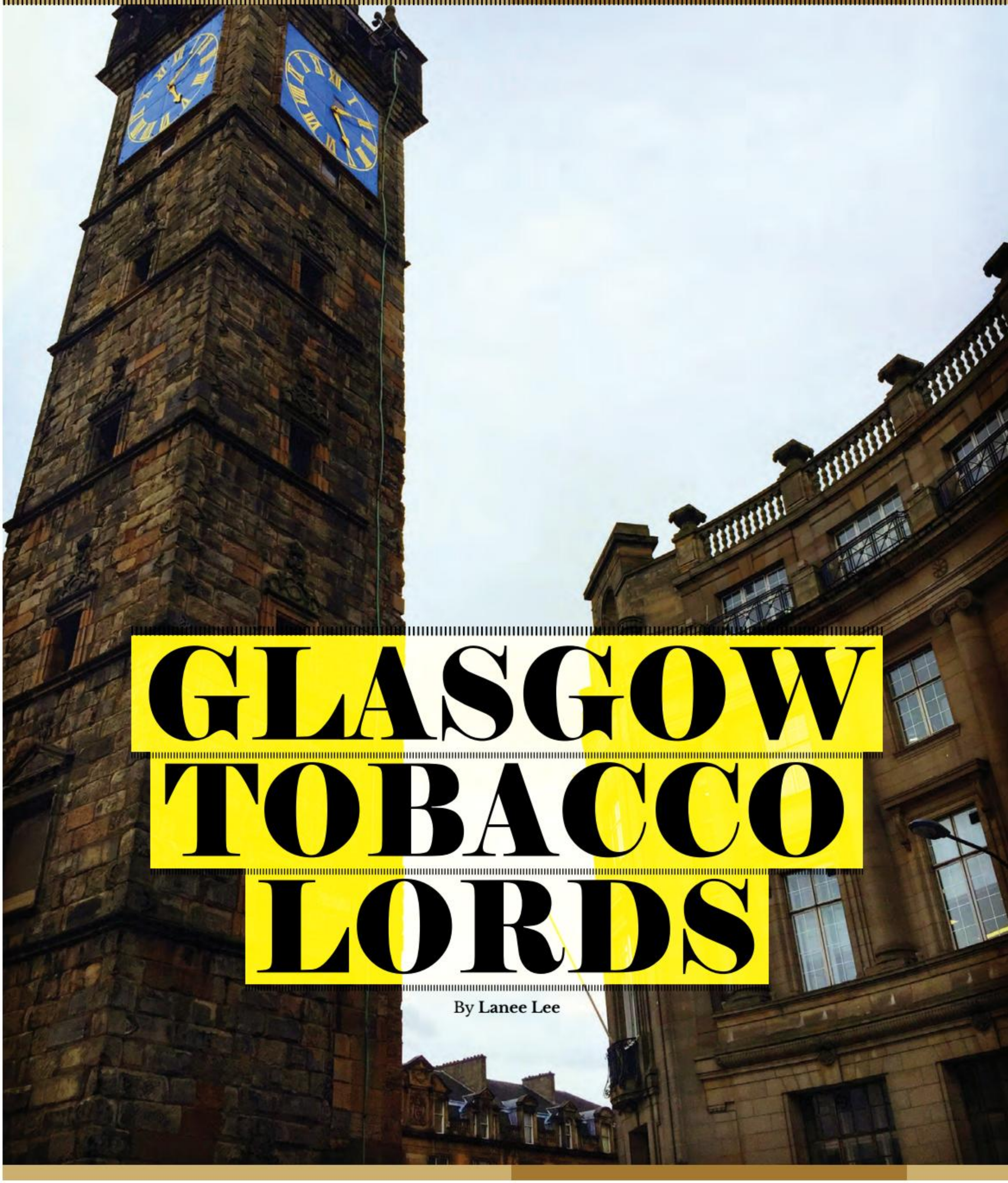
Now it's time for the fun part: **Placing your bet**. Placing a bet is not intimidating, but you will need to know exactly what you would like when you get to the counter--things tend to move quickly, especially closer to the race's post. Be sure to have your money in-hand by the time you reach the counter!

To place your bet, you will need to tell the teller the following information, in this specific order:
1. The race number of the race you wish to bet
2. The amount of your bet
3. The type of bet you are placing
4. The horse's race number

It will sound like this: "Race seven, $2 to win on number 7." The teller will take your money and give you your ticket.

Be sure to keep your ticket in a safe place; you don't want to be scrambling when it's time to collect your winnings!

There are tons of resources out there to make your wagers more effective. Some of them to look into include the **Daily Racing Form**, tip sheets from professional handicappers, and track odds maker's write-ups.



GLASGOW TOBACCO LORDS

By Lanee Lee

The people make Glasgow". While that is the city's motto, and while that may be true today; historically, it was the tobacco trade that made Glasgow an economic powerhouse and led to the creation of the ridiculously wealthy and notorious Glasgow Tobacco Lords. Prior to the 1700's Glasgow was a mostly agricultural community with an unstable economy that was subject to the crown. One of the economic limitations imposed by the English was the Navigation Act, which hindered the Scottish from profiting in the growing trade with England's colonies (including America), but Glasgow's location and savvy merchant skills would propel them into an economic boom and turn mere merchants into Tobacco Lords.

WHAT WAS THE TOBACCO TRADE?

Glasgow was part of a triangular trade system in which goods such as sugar, rum, and tobacco were exchanged between Europe and the new world, including colonies in the Americas and the Caribbean. Unfortunately, the third prong of this trade route included ports in Africa in which slaves were brought to America's shores and traded for our keystone export – American tobacco. The 1707 Act of Union is what initially sanctioned Glasgow merchants to engage in trade with the colonies, but interestingly enough the first documented shipment of Virginia tobacco to Glasgow was back in 1674, in scandalous violation of England's laws.

Beyond merely trading tobacco, Glasgow merchants went further by setting up shop on the shores of Maryland and Virginia. At the stores they would keep barrels of tobacco stocked and ready so that trading ships would waste little time upon port entry. Here, farmers could also exchange tobacco for various goods, tools, money and credit.

HOW DID GLASGOW BENEFIT FROM THE TOBACCO TRADE?

Simply put, it was Glasgow's position on the west side of Scotland, along the River Clyde, that made it the perfect jumping off point for trading with the West Indies and America. Why? Well, Europe's taste for Virginia tobacco was rapacious and Glasgow just happened to be located where the trade winds hit Europe first, giving Glasgow merchants at least a two-week advantage over other ports in Europe. This edge is what prompted France to give Glasgow the monopoly on all of the imports of tobacco into French territories.

Now responsible for 50 percent of Europe's tobacco imports, and up to 80 percent of its re-exports, which was greater than all of Britain's trade combined, Glasgow hit the jackpot. With Clyde ports quickly becoming top dog in the tobacco trade, Glasgow went from a rural country town to a bustling metropolis virtually overnight. Enter the age of the Glasgow Tobacco Lords.

WHO WERE THESE TOBACCO LORDS?

These were the guys that made loads of money in the tobacco trade, and boy did they like to flaunt their wealth. The Glasgow Tobacco Lords made sure everybody knew who they were by wearing ostentatious clothing as well as building lavish mansions and churches throughout the city. For example, the Tobacco Lords definitely had their own style. They would parade their swag in the streets with flashy scarlet cloaks and Tricorn hats atop their silver wigs while tapping their silver-tipped walking canes. Naturally, they did all their strutting along paved roads such as Trongate, which has been said to have been claimed as their own by the Tobacco Lords.

“THE GLASGOW TOBACCO LORDS MADE SURE EVERYBODY KNEW WHO THEY WERE BY WEARING OSTENTATIOUS CLOTHING AS WELL AS BUILDING LAVISH MANSIONS AND CHURCHES THROUGHOUT THE CITY.”

All around the city of modern-day Glasgow, street names serve as a reminder of its tobacco trade past. For example, in an area of downtown known as Merchant City, the Lords liked to flaunt their outlandish outfits and was the prime location where they chose to build their opulent mansions. Their own names as well as the names of their grand residences–and of the places that earned them their fortunes–still grace the streets of Glasgow today. The infamous Buchanan Street is named after Tobacco Lord Andrew Buchanan, while Virginia Street is named after Tobacco Lord Alexander Speirs' Virginia Mansion. His name was also given to Speirs Wharf. The same goes for Ingram Street and Dunlop Street, named after Archibald Ingram and James Dunlop. William Cunninghame's over-the-top mansion on Queen Street still stands grand, and has been repurposed as the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art.

>> Necropolis, the city of the dead, is a dramatic cemetery located high up on the hill overlooking the city.

If the Tobacco Lords had their own style, their own streets and their own estates, then clearly they would have their own churches. The sensational St. Andrew's Parish Church, located near the home of Alexander Speirs, was commissioned by the Tobacco Lords as another way to showcase their fortunes. Still considered one of the most impressive 18th century churches in Scotland, St. Andrews is now a center for performing art.

With grand churches to worship, one would naturally need an impressive place to rest in peace. Necropolis, the city of the dead, is a dramatic cemetery located high up on the hill overlooking the city. These men were rich, powerful, and wanted people to know it in life as well as in death. Just like their outrageous estates and churches, their eternal monuments spared no expense.

>>The infamous Buchanan Street is named after Tobacco Lord Andrew Buchanan

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POLITICAL TENSIONS

Despite the fancy garb, things were not always as they seemed. Malcontent colonists felt cheated by the tobacco trade, and tensions steadily grew approaching the 1760's. The colonists believed that the Glasgow Tobacco Lords were manipulating prices and causing tobacco farmers to fall into major debt. You see, the English merchants made their money by selling the tobacco to Europe, but the Glasgow Tobacco Lords pre-arranged deals and then offered credit, giving huge loans to these planters. This line of credit would allow the tobacco farmers to purchase goods before their crop was harvested.

Unfortunately, many farmers found themselves deep in debt and were put in the difficult position of selling their crop for ridiculously low prices. Some of the high profile planters that were indebted to the ruthless Tobacco Lords and near bankruptcy included future Presidents of the United States George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson even stated that Tobacco Lords had submerged them in so much debt that it would be impossible to recover without selling one's land and property.

IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON TOBACCO TRADE

The year of 1775 was not good for Glasgow Tobacco Lords. The start of the American Revolution also marked the end of the big tobacco trade. Not only was it unfeasible for planters to pay off debts, but Tobacco Lords could no longer pick up cargo as Glasgow ships were not safe due to the hostile conditions of numerous battles.

Once the war was over and America gained independence, the tobacco planters no longer needed the Glasgow merchants as middlemen. They could now sell tobacco directly to Europe for themselves.

Some Tobacco Lords never recovered from the blow and lost everything, like John Glassford. He was said to be one of most successful of the Tobacco Lords, owning the biggest fleet of ships at that time as well as various tobaccos plantations. He made fortunes at the tobacco trade, but due the American war he died buried in debt.

However, some merchants cashed out just in time and found new thriving business ventures, such as the trade of sugar and cotton from the new world. Others like William Cunninghame were savvy enough to buy tobacco stock off his panicked partners and then sold them high, helping to maintain his fortunes.

The tobacco trade provided fifty years of major growth for the city of Glasgow, and the wallets of shrewd merchants. Owing directly to American tobacco, a small town in Scotland became an industrial city–and its merchants– wealthy lords. While the American Revolution ended the tobacco trade boom in Glasgow, reminders of its illustrious past are still present in the city today, making it hard to forget that tobacco, in fact, first made Glasgow.

FEATURED CIGARS RATED

27 CIGARS RATED

Ratings are the average based on a blind tasting of each cigar by our expert panel of eight cigar connoisseurs, who together possess more than 100 years of cigar-smoking experience. >>

To provide feedback on any of the ratings, or to offer your own opinions on any of the cigars featured, write us at: feedback@cigarandspirits.com.

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CRUX NINFAMANIAC

7 x 33 DOUBLE PERFECTO

WRAPPER: Habano Jalapa
BINDER: Indonesia
FILLER: Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Medium bodied, medium strength with a semi sweet cocoa core surrounded by hints of nutmeg.

88 Cigar & Spirits RATING

CRUX DU CONNOISSEUR NO. 2

6 ½ x 38 LANCERO

WRAPPER: Habano Jalapa
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Honduras

TASTING NOTES:
Medium-plus bodied, medium-plus strength. Profile is creamy and buttery with floral notes.

89 Cigar & Spirits RATING

CRUX CLASSIC TORO MARBLEHEAD

6 x 52 TORO MARBLEHEAD

WRAPPER: Habano Jalapa
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Medium bodied and medium strength. Profile exudes light caramel sweetness and hints of spice.

91 Cigar & Spirits RATING

DAVIDOFF YEAR OF THE MONKEY

6 ½ x 50 TORO

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Habano
BINDER: Mexican San Andrés Negro
FILLER: Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Peru

TASTING NOTES:
Medium Full bodied, and full minus strength featuring a flavor core of creamy oak and milk chocolate. Rounding out the profile are hints of peanut, cinnamon, roasted coffee beans and dark cocoa.

94 Cigar & Spirits RATING

AVO 90TH CLASSIC COVERS VOLUME 3

6 x 54 TORO

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Habano 2000
BINDER: Mexican Negro San Andrés
FILLER: San Vicente Mejorado Visus (DR), Piloto Seco (DR), Hybrid Corojo/Olor Visus (DR)-Aged 10 years, Criollo Seco (DR)-Aged 11 years.

TASTING NOTES:
Medium in body and strength, the AVO 90th showcases notes of earth, cedar, spice and hints of citrus.

92 Cigar & Spirits RATING

DAVIDOFF WINSTON CHURCHILL LIMITED EDITION 2016 THE RACONTEUR

6 x 56 GRAN TORO

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Habano 2000
BINDER: Mexican San Andrés Negro
FILLER: Dominican Republic & Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Just shy of Full strength, The Raconteur offers an instant creaminess followed by pepper, roasted nuts, oak wood, and hints of leather.

94 Cigar & Spirits RATING

ESTEBAN CARRERAS 10 AÑOS

6 x 52 TORO

WRAPPER: Nicaraguan-Aged 10 Years
BINDER: Nicaraguan
FILLER: Nicaraguan

TASTING NOTES:
Lightly box pressed and medium-full bodied and strength, the flavor profile is a core of rich cocoa with hints of sweet earth.

92 Cigar & Spirits RATING

FABLE CIGAR FOURTH PRIME

5¼ x 56 ROBUSTO EXTRA

WRAPPER: Pennsylvania Broadleaf
BINDER: Ecuador Habano Ligero
FILLER: Nicaragua/Dominican Republic

TASTING NOTES:
Dominated by sweeter elements, the flavor profile is highlighted by a core of chocolate, sweet spices and peppers with hints of coffee, espresso, and cinnamon. Medium-full in body and strength.

91 Cigar & Spirits RATING

PUNCH RARE COROJO REGALIAS PERFECTO

7 ½ x 54 PERFECTO

WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Connecticut Broadleaf
FILLER: Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic

TASTING NOTES:
Medium in body and strength, the Rare Corojo offers a complex profile that is spicy yet smooth.

92 Cigar & Spirits RATING

HOYO ROBUSTO

5 x 54 ROBUSTO

WRAPPER: Nicaragua (Estelí) Habano Shade
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Nicaragua (Estelí, Ometepe), Pennsylvania Ligero

TASTING NOTES:
Medium Full with deep rich flavors and peppery undertones.

89 Cigar & Spirits RATING

BOLIVAR 660

6 x 60 GRAN TORO

WRAPPER: USA Habano Connecticut Grown
BINDER: Ecuador
Filler: Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Dominican Republic

TASTING NOTES:
Bold and full-flavored across the palate. The Bolivar 660 is full bodied and medium-full in strength with a woodsy core hints of cocoa.

88 Cigar & Spirits RATING

H. UPMANN YARGÜERA

6 x 54 TORO

WRAPPER: Yargüera '13 Tapado (Shade)
BINDER: Criollo '98
FILLER: Sungrown Yargüera '13 and Criollo '98

TASTING NOTES:
Medium bodied and Medium in strength the Yargüera offers a woody and earth core surrounded by hints of spice.

88 Cigar & Spirits RATING

QUESADA RESERVA PRIVADA

6 ½ x 56 TORO GORDO

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Connecticut
BINDER: Dominican San Vicente '97 Vintage
FILLER: Dominican San Vicente '97 Vintage from Cosecha Pareja crops, Pennsylvania Ligero

TASTING NOTES:
Medium-full strength and medium bodied, the Reserva Privada is creamy at its core with hints of subtle spice, cedar, and dried floral notes.

88 Cigar & Spirits RATING

ROCKY PATEL TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

5 x 54 ROBUSTO GRANDE

WRAPPER: Honduras
BINDER: Trade Secret
FILLER: Nicaragua (Estelí, Jalapa) Jamastran, Honduras

TASTING NOTES:
Full bodied and full strength, the Twentieth Anniversary is rich and decadent with hints of chocolate, cedar, nuts and earth.

93 Cigar & Spirits RATING

ROCKY PATEL PRIVATE CELLAR

6 x 52

WRAPPER: Connecticut Broadleaf
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Medium-Full bodied with a rich and dense smoke that carries a sweet profile of dark chocolate, espresso beans and a hint of earthiness.

90 Cigar & Spirits RATING

XEN BY NISH PATEL

5 x 50 ROBUSTO

WRAPPER: Ecuador (Connecticut Seed)
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Trade Secret

TASTING NOTES:
Medium bodied and slightly below medium in strength, the XEN by Nish Patel offers zesty flavors with a rich spiciness that is reminiscent of a dry hopped IPA.

89 Cigar & Spirits RATING

SOBREMESA EL AMERICANO BY DUNBARTON TOBACCO & TRUST

6 x 52 TORO

WRAPPER: La Mec Ecuador Habano Grade 1 Dark Rosado
BINDER: Matacapan Negro de Temporal
FILLER: Nicaraguan GK Condega C-SG Seco, Nicaraguan Pueblo Nuevo Criollo Viso, Nicaraguan La Joya de Esteli C-98 Viso, Nicaraguan ASP Estelí Hybrid Ligero, USA Lancaster County Broadleaf Lifgero

TASTING NOTES:
Medium-Full in body and strength, this liga is creamy to the core with an abundance of cocoa, cedar, brewed coffee with hints of pepper on the retrohale.

92 Cigar & Spirits RATING

NAT CICCO ANIVERSARIO 1965

5 ½ x 56 ROBUSTO GRANDE

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Habano
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Full Bodied and rich in flavors of cocoa and woodsy and creamy undertones.

89 Cigar & Spirits RATING

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NAT CICCO HHB CLASSIC

6 ¾ x 58 TORO

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Connecticut
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Dominican Republic, Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Medium Bodied with a thick creamy smoke surrounded by toasted cedar and pepper. Sweet cream and vanilla on the finish.

92
Cigar & Spirits RATING

NAT CICCO HHB GOLD

6 ¾ x 58 TORO

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Habano
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Dominican Republic, Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Medium-Full Bodied. Earthy barnyard notes with a touch of leather and orange spice.

86
Cigar & Spirits RATING

FUENTE FUENTE OPUS X ANGEL'S SHARE

5 ⅝ x 46 FUENTE FUENTE

WRAPPER: Dominican Chateau de la Fuente Sun Grown
BINDER: Dominican Republic
FILLER: Dominican Republic

TASTING NOTES:
Medium Bodied, and Medium-Full in strength with a rich complexity of flavor. Buttery and creamy on the palate with notes of cedar, earth and cinnamon surrounded by hints of raisin, and sweet roasted nuts.

94
Cigar & Spirits RATING

FUENTE FUENTE OPUS X PERFECXION X

6 ¼ x 48 PERFECXION X

WRAPPER: Dominican Chateau de la Fuente Sun Grown Rosado
BINDER: Dominican Republic
FILLER: Dominican Republic

TASTING NOTES:
Medium to full bodied, the Perfecxion X featured a well rounded profile of spice and leather with hints of espresso and oak.

93
Cigar & Spirits RATING

ARTURO FUENTE DON CARLOS PRESIDENTE

6 ½ x 52 CHURCHILL

WRAPPER: Cameroon
BINDER: Dominican Republic
FILLER: Dominican Republic

TASTING NOTES:
Medium bodied and medium strength, the Don Carlos is balanced across the palate with a zesty flavor core featuring hints of spice, almonds, and citrus.

90
Cigar & Spirits RATING

PADRÓN DAMASO NO. 34

6 x 52

WRAPPER: Connecticut
BINDER: Nicaraguan
FILLER: Nicaraguan

TASTING NOTES:
Smooth and nuanced, mild in body and medium strength the Damaso is surrounded by cocoa, caramel, and cedar. The profile is accentuated by hints of pepper delivered on a bed of creamy smoke.

93
Cigar & Spirits RATING

MONTECRISTO #2 HABANOS S.A.

6 x 52 BELICOSO

WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba

TASTING NOTES:
Mild-Medium in strength and body with soft floral notes surrounded by creamy vanilla and toasted cedar.

MAYA SELVA CUMPAY NO. 15

5 ½ x 54 OBELISK

WRAPPER: Habano Jalapa– Nicaragua
BINDER: Estelí, Jalapa – Nicaragua
FILLER: Ometepe, Jalapa – Nicaragua

TASTING NOTES:
Rich woody core surrounded by spicy notes with earthy undertones.

FOUNDRY CHILLIN' MOOSE

5 ½ X 50 ROBUSTO

WRAPPER: Connecticut Rosado
BINDER: Ecuadorian Sumatra
FILLER: Dominican, Nicaraguan, Mexico, USA

TASTING NOTES:
Medium bodied with flavors of chocolate, anise, sweet cedar, and an earthy spice on the nose.

POWERHOUSE PAIRINGS | A Delicious Duet for Your Palate

BY BENJAMIN WINOKUR

MONTECRISTO WHITE SERIES NO. 2 BELICOSO

Featuring an Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper, with binder and filler tobaccos from the Dominican Republic, the Montecristo White Series is a lovely Connecticut Shade Wrapped cigar with a mild body of flavor a mild strength.

Sweet on the initial draw, immediately upon lighting there is toasty burst of flavor and an absence of the usually expected bitterness that is often present in Connecticut tobacco.

When paired up with this month's featured pairing spirit, Ron Zacapa Centenario Sistemo Solera 23, there is a beautiful nectar sweetness from the Ron Zacapa with hints of raw sugar, that when paired with the Montecristo White Series reminds me of a fresh apricot jam.

Throughout the smoking experience of the Montecristo White there is a zesty and refreshing pepper that is present on the nose, it nicely counteracts the sweetness of Zacapa, providing some much needed balance and contrast to the pairing.

With such a mild cigar, I was hesitant to pair it with Zacapa served neat, and while it is a tasty pairing, I think this combo would truly be a home run if you were to serve this with a splash of ginger beer (not ale) and a squeeze of lime, a la Dark & Stormy. Purists will probably pout and throw their arms up and say "you don't mix Zacapa!" I say do what tastes best to you and satiates your palate. For you purists, read on! There is a pairing that is right up your alley just below...

WRAPPER: Ecuadorian Connecticut
BINDER: Dominican Republic
FILLER: Dominican Republic
MSRP: $14.50

ROMEO Y JULIETA AGING ROOM CANTAOR BELICOSO

From the same family as our #1 Cigar of 2015, this Romeo y Julieta was a collaborative project between Boutique Blends and Altadis to create a cigar that evoked the deep flavors that Boutique Blends is known for with the smooth and sultry flavors we've come to expect from Romeo y Julieta.

Very sweet on the initial light, this belicoso showcases soft fruit notes with hints of caramel and vanilla. This medium bodied cigar is full of flavor and makes for a tantalizing pairing alongside the wonderfully rich and full flavored Zacapa Rum.

The entirety of the smoking experience is dominated by sweet and superbly balanced flavors which beautifully accentuate the similar notes present in Zacapa Rum. Notes of molasses and brown sugar are drawn out from this Solera rum by the similar delicious notes which come puff after flavorful puff from the Romeo y Julieta Aging Room Cantaor Belicoso. If it's smooth and rich flavors you seek, this is a pairing made just for you.

WRAPPER: Habano Dominicano
BINDER: Habano Dominicano
FILLER: Habano Dominicano
MSRP: $12.50

Benjamin Winokur is the Editor-in-Chief of Cigar & Spirits Magazine and a Certified Salesforce Tobacconist. You can follow him on Instagram & Twitter @CigarJedi

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BOURBON

— GETTING THE RIGHT GRAINS

BY SARAH E. COLEMAN

Though distilleries must use at least 51 percent corn to create true, U.S. "bourbon," the remaining ingredients can be left to the imagination.

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AS ALL BOURBON AFICIONADOS KNOW, this tasty libation requires one very specific ingredient: corn. The Federal Tax and Trade Bureau, which defines and regulates all spirits, has only one grain stipulation for bourbon: it must contain least 51 percent corn. This opens up a realm of creativity and interpretation to what the other grains can be. Most distillers have traditionally used rye as the secondary grain and most distillers also use malted barley to help with fermentation, but neither of these grains are required to make bourbon.

ALL BOURBONS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL

American bourbon distilleries all use similar equipment to produce bourbon, and 98 percent of the world's bourbon is produced in Kentucky, in the same climate. While these factors would, in theory, create a recipe for cookie-cutter bourbons, the exact opposite is actually true. As distilleries have at least 49 percent wiggle room with the grains in their bourbon, there is plenty of room for creativity and interpretation.

Many distilleries use the following grains to create a unique taste:

Corn: This grain gives bourbon its sweetness and provides the highest yield of alcohol per bushel. Though very prevalent-tasting in the "White Dog" phase of bourbon making (fresh from the still), the taste mellows over years of aging.

Rye: Rye brings about a spicy note to bourbon, including tastes such as pepper, clove, cinnamon and nutmeg. Rye provides bourbon with the "bite" it is famous for.

Barley: Barley produces enzymes that convert starch to sugar during the fermenting process. Though barley does produce some flavor (mainly malt and chocolate notes), it is mainly used as the workhorse in the bourbon-making process.

Wheat: Wheat has a much milder flavor than rye, allowing the sweetness of the corn to come through in the final bourbon product.

Some more unusual grains that are used in various bourbon distilleries across the U.S. include brown rice, soft red wheat, rolled oats, millet, quinoa and buckwheat.

QUALITY CONTROL

Distillers are very particular about the quality of corn that is used to create bourbon, as it has such a heavy influence on the taste of the final product. Most of the corn used in Kentucky distilleries is sourced from farms in Kentucky and Indiana that have had relationships with the distilleries for many years.

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Shipped to the distilleries in tractor trailers, each load of grain undergoes a series of evaluations, including a visual inspection for any abnormalities. The grain is then weighed to ensure that it adheres to baseline characteristics approved by the distillery. Finally, a sample is tested in the distillery's laboratory to ensure that moisture standards and chemical balances are met.

DO THE MASH

Once the grains are found to be satisfactory, they are milled into fine powder before being cooked to form a mash. Distillers have varying preferences for how the mill their grains, as even this small detail will affect the flavor of the bourbon; some distilleries press the grains with a hammer mill, while others pulverize them in the husk; still other distilleries choose a roller mill.

Distilleries that press their grains from the husk use a heavy roller, discarding the husk and retaining the grain. Pulverizing the grains smashes them in their husks, then the mix of husks and grains are used in the mash, which can create a more-bitter taste. The result, regardless of the chosen method, are grains that have been transformed into a fine powder that is ready to be cooked. All grains are stored separately.

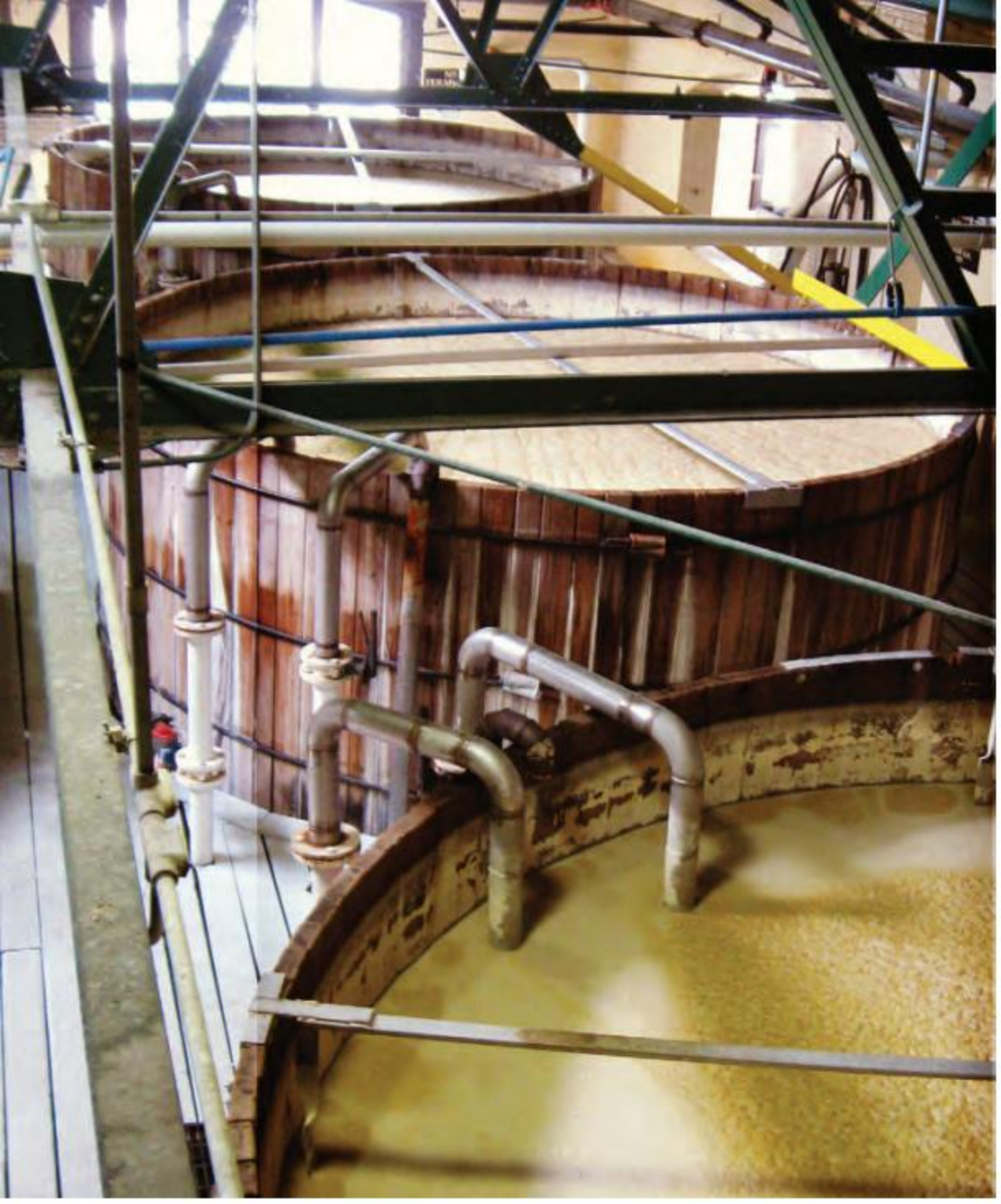
Cooking is the next step in the bourbon-making process. To begin, the first grain is portioned out according to the distillery's recipe. Water is then added. Geographically, Kentucky sits atop a massive limestone layer that readily filters impurities from the water. Many distilleries use spring water that is sourced from areas where the limestone layer is broken and water bubbles up. Distilleries located in more-industrial areas will use the local water supply, but will demineralize or deionize the water to purify it.

This grain and water mixture (now called mash) is then placed in a cooker, where it is exposed to high heat for a varying amount of time, depending on the grains involved and the distilleries' individual bourbon recipe. Corn is typically the first ingredient to be cooked, and at the highest temperature. It is then cooled, followed by rye, barley and any other grains (if the distillery chooses) are added in. The mixture of grains used in creating each distinct bourbon is referenced on the "mash bill." Pumps circulate the cooking mixture, making sure all the grains are cooked evenly. It's of utmost importance that the grains are not overcooked, as this can break down their proteins and caramelize the sugars, resulting in a bitter taste.

BOURBON AND THE YEAST

Once finished cooking, the mash is then moved to a fermenter, where yeast is added. Yeast is integral to the bourbon-making process. Each distillery has their own particular yeast strain, some of which are tightly kept secrets so as to set a particular bourbon apart from its peers. During fermentation, which typically takes three to five days, the yeast converts the sugar in the mash into alcohol, carbon dioxide, and heat.

At this point in the bourbon-making process, distillation residue, called by a few different terms "stillage," "backset," or "sour mash" (which is formed at a later stage in the bourbon-making process), is added from previous bourbon batches. This added stillage is part of the sour-mash process for which American distilleries are famous. At the end of the fermentation process, the mash has become what is called a "distiller's beer" and is about 12 to 15 percent alcohol.



DISTILLATION

Many American distilleries utilize column stills for distillation, which allows for a continuous distillation process. (Some distilleries use pot stills or combination pot and column stills.) A column still is a vertical tube that is sectioned off using metal plates. The column is filled with the distiller's beer from the fermenter and the bottom plates are heated. As the still heats up, alcohol vapors will rise through the column to the top while water, with the remnants of the grain particles will gather at the bottom (alcohol has a lower boiling point than water). This accumulation at the bottom of the column is called "stillage"; some of this is saved to be added to the fermenters of future batches and continues the cycle of the "sour mash" process.

At the top of the column, the alcohol vapors are cooled and then re-condensed back into liquid form. Typically, the liquid is distilled a second time through a copper pot still, called a doubler.
After the vapor goes through the condenser, where it liquefies and becomes raw whiskey, also called "white dog," "moonshine" or "white lightening." The first portion of this distillate that comes out of the still is known as the "heads" and the last part is known as the "tails." In between the beginning and the end of the distillate is known as the "hearts," the portion sought after by the distillers. Bourbon can be distilled at no more than 160 proof.

From here, the whiskey goes into new, charred white-oak barrels at no more than 125 proof to await its transformation into bourbon. The liquid gains both color and flavor from the caramelized sugars in the charred wood of the barrel.

In order to be called Bourbon, the product does not have to age for any certain time period. It could be aged for just one day, though it would likely not taste very good. To be labeled "straight" it must be aged for a minimum of 2 years. Any bourbon aged less than 4 years must be denoted with an age label.

DELICIOUS DETAILS

Though the process of making bourbon may not seem overly complicated, it is heavily regulated by the Federal Standards of Identity for Distilled Spirits. This entity states that bourbon made for U.S. consumption must adhere to the following guidelines:

- -Bourbon must be made in the United States; it is declared by Congress to be **"America's Native Spirit"**
- -Bourbon must have a mash bill of at least 51 percent corn
- -Bourbon must be aged in new, charred, oak barrels
- -Bourbon must be distilled at less than 160 proof and enter into the barrel at below 125 proof
- -Bourbon can have no artificial coloring or flavoring added
- -Bourbon must be bottled at 80 proof or more (40 percent alcohol by volume)

While all bourbons must follow these guidelines, many distilleries take creative liberties with their libation, using unique grain mixes to create unusual, delicious concoctions.

A Kentucky transplant, Sarah Coleman got to the Bluegrass as quickly as she could, drawn by the equine industry and all that it entails. She has since become an avid fan of both bourbon and basketball.

AN ARGUMENT OVER ORIGIN

THE HISTORY SURROUNDING bourbon's origin is a bit murky; some argue that it came from Bourbon Street in New Orleans, where bourbon was shipped down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers for trade. Others (and don't argue with a Kentuckian about this!) say it originated in Bourbon County, Ky.

Elijah Craig, a Baptist minister, is often credited as being the "inventor" of bourbon, aging corn whiskey in oak barrels that had been charred in a fire in 1789. Sadly, there are few historical facts to actually support this story; there were corn whiskey distilleries in Kentucky before 1789. Refutable for not, Craig came to lasting fame: Heaven Hill Distillery has two bourbons labeled with his moniker, Elijah Craig 18-Year-Old Single Barrel and Elijah Craig 20-Year-Old Single Barrel.

A combination of the two trains of thought converge in this theory: Distillers in Kentucky used to bottle their bourbon as "white dog" that was not aged and was clear. When shipping their product by boat to New Orleans, they had to wait for warmer months when there was no ice on the Ohio River. The bourbon sat in barrels for many months between waiting for clear rivers and the 3-month trek down the river, allowing it to age and absorb the sugars from the charred barrels. Kentucky distillers didn't realize that their "white dog" had turned color until they opened the barrels in New Orleans. People began asking for the libation by name, calling it the "Bourbon Street Whiskey" then, shortened to "Bourbon."

HAPPY COWS LIVE IN KENTUCKY

DISTILLATION RESIDUE, called stillage, accumulates at the bottom of the stills during the distillation phase of bourbon making. Though some of the stillage is processed into the sour mash [illegible] reintroduced into the product at the fermentation stage, [illegible] rest of it is simply a byproduct.

In an effort to make this stillage useful, distilleries remove the accumulated water, fibers, and proteins that collect at the bottom of the still. The water is removed from the collected matter in large drums using steam. The solids are then taken out and given to farmers to use as a livestock feedstuff that is high in protein, fat, and trace elements.

The amount of stillage left over is nothing to sneeze at: it's estimated that Kentucky distilleries alone gave away about $2.5 million worth of spent grains in 2014—enough feed 90,000 head of cattle per year.

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>> Jon Taffer is the host of the hit TV Series *Bar Rescue* on Spike TV.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JON TAFFER

THE KING OF TRANSFORMATIVE TELEVISION

By Benjamin Winokour

>> On the set of *Bar Rescue*.

It's just before noon on a typical Thursday in Downtown Santa Monica. The sun is out, and there's a cool breeze blowing onshore from the Pacific Ocean. I'm at Barney's Beanery, on the 3rd Street Promenade in Downtown Santa Monica preparing for an interview with one of the true legends of the spirits industry, Jon Taffer.

Most people know Jon Taffer from his hit TV Series Bar Rescue on Spike TV. His depth of knowledge comes from years of hard work and dedication to his craft–dedication that would one day lead to him being one of the most well known and respected stars of transformative television.

Soft-spoken, yet with a presence that commands the room, Jon Taffer is a man that has rescued hundreds of bars, and enjoyed countless cigars along the way. Rescuing bars wasn't always the plan for Taffer though; in fact, it was more of an afterthought to his main business, which had always been buying and selling bars and restaurants. After years of making the rounds through the speaking circuit for the National Restaurant Association and Bar and Nightclub Convention, Taffer experienced something new- a joy in helping people become successful...and well, it's a story best heard from the man himself.

Cigar & Spirits: Jon, most people know you from the hit TV Series Bar Rescue on Spike and you've recently hit a really exciting milestone. Can you tell us more about that?

Jon Taffer: Oh yeah, the 100th episode. It's been an amazingly personal thing to me...100 episodes of Bar Rescue, honestly, I thought I'd do a pilot and go home, I really did. When Season One was picked up, I never thought about season two. It never seemed like something that would happen. Season one was 10 episodes, then season two was 10 episodes. Season three was 40 episodes, and season four was 50 episodes. I just finished, and I started in July 2014. Each season I think it's over, and it just keeps going, and the ratings are strong as ever.

C&S: Would it be safe to say that it's had a profound effect on you?

JT: The personal part of it is that sometimes you feel as if you've been hugged by America. I know it sounds weird, but you do.

C&S: Jon, what was your motivation to save bars, where did the inspiration come from?

JT: That's really a good question. I didn't realize the answer to that question until you asked it...Years ago, I started doing these seminars at Nightclub & Bar, and then hotel conferences would invite me in to talk. I would go to Nightclub & Bar or the National Restaurant Association, I would give a seminar, let's say there's 100, 120 people in the room. At the end of that seminar, people would run up to me, they'd hug me, they would thank me, they'd send me notes.

I'd hear how I changed their lives, or how I told them to do something, they did it and their business went up. I think I started to get this gratification after those events, to be honest with you. It felt so good because I always wanted to do more of those, teach more people. Those hugs felt amazing afterwards, and the notes. People would say, "You know, Jon, I tried that promotion, it worked great, man. I paid off my debt," or, "I'm opening another bar," I want to hear those things all the time. In the seminar, in education, you get immediate gratification from it because you're looking in their eyes. I sort of got hooked on that, to tell you the truth.

C&S: What's the biggest challenge with Bar Rescue after all these episodes?

JT: Imagine if I gave you a chicken breast, and I said to you, "I want you to cook it for me 112 different ways." That's Bar Rescue to me. You can cook it 10 ways, 11, 12, 13, but at some

point, you're going to start cooking chicken breast the same way you cooked it before. My challenge for Bar Rescue is to make it different all the time. You can't make it different by design, because at the end of the day it's the bars that I wind up in and the people that wind up in those bars that create what we get. The challenge of finding newness all the time is not easy.

C&S: That makes a lot of sense. One of the things we see all the time on social media, through your channels, are people asking you to come rescue this bar, or that bar. How do you and your team decide on which bars to rescue?

JT: Great question. It's a pretty long process. Every season, we'll get anywhere from 2,000 to 2,200 requests on either my website or the Spike TV website. Each year, we'll pick three cities or so that we're going to go to. This year for instance, I know I'm going to go Denver, San Francisco Bay Area, and New Orleans. We pick the cities we're going to, then we shoot two or three in each city. That's how the economics work.

"All types of flavored cigars, actually, were really fun to me, and then of course, traditional cigars, Cubans... I like heavier cigars, and when I don't have a real cigar in my hand...I have an e-cigar in my hand."

Then we'll look at the applications...We'll look at the bar, we'll do a verification to make certain there's no background issues, they're not felons or criminals or owe a million dollars in taxes or any of those kinds of things.

If it looks like they're truly losing money and they're not criminals, we'll actually send the producer there, just with a little smartphone or a little hand camera. They'll shoot a six, seven minute video. All it is is talking to each employee for a second, "What's your name, what do you do here?"

Then the owner will tell their story very quickly, you know, "My wife and I opened this place, we did this, we did that..." Then my casting team – I used to look at these but I haven't in about 50, 60, maybe 70 episodes – will look at those and pick the most compelling story. Obviously we want a good story.

If it's two brothers that are in a bad spot, that's an interesting story. Two partners who are ready to kill each other, hostile takeovers, husbands and wives who are facing divorce or losing houses...We look for stories that people are interested in from a personal standpoint.

The producers – again, I don't any more – choose those bars. I show up the first night, and it's the first time I've ever seen or heard of the place. It goes back to that challenge of, "How do you do it new every time?"

C&S: I think that's what helps lend so much authenticity to the show. The fact that you've never seen the bar before that moment when you first walk in really makes you think on your feet. What else goes on, that maybe people don't see?

JT: What happens behind the scenes is, I'll show up on set maybe a half hour before I go in to do recon...I get maybe a 60-second brief, something like "Ben owns Ben's Bar, it's in Ben, Iowa. Ben owes this amount of money, he's 60 days away from losing his home, he's losing x amount of dollars a month." It's always the same questions I ask the producers: "What's on the line? Who owns it? How long have they owned it? Who are their good employees? Who are their bad employees?"

After the brief, I get in the SUV and I do the show. At the end of recon, when I walk out of the bar, we turn the cameras off. I take all the employees, and I stick them in a van in the parking lot. During that half hour, I go into the bar with my art department and I design the bar that night.

The next morning, I'll do another walk through with the art department. I personally sign off on everything – bar stools, wallpapers, paints, flooring, bar tops, finishes, glassware, recipes, plate appearances. By the end of day two, which is also the stress test, I need to have the logos done, menus done, everything done, so the sign maker can get [everything] printed, laminated and back to us in time. Really, it's all done in about 24 hours.

By the time I go to bed that night, not only have we shot training, stress test and screaming and yelling at everybody, but I've really signed off on everything.

Day three we train, and maybe handle some final sign-offs and technical issues, but by seven o'clock on the third day I send the cast on their way, the staff on their way, and we remodel that night. We remodel it in 36 hours. If we run late, it's 38 or 39, but no more than that. That's when I'm wearing my hat on set. You've seen some of those scenes where we're working with the design team. Then, in the afternoon of day five, I spin them around and they see it.

C&S: Wow, so you're really looking at less than one week for a complete transformation for these bars you're helping out?

JT: Oh yeah. When you think about how much time I'm with them...I'm really only with them for two, two-and-a-half days. The rest of the time is remodel. It's not a lot of time to change the way somebody acts.

C&S: Definitely. There is a lot that goes into rescuing a bar, so much so that you've actually created a couple of different programs to help these owners, and people that you haven't rescued, to emulate the successes that you've had with some of the restaurants and bars on Bar Rescue. Can you tell me more about those?

JT: Sure. For years I've done seminars around the country. I'm fortunate that I'm good at those and I sell out. Years ago I did a rescue tour. The concept of the rescue tour was I would come do a four hour live show. We teach them how to grow their business. I did them in five or six cities, we sold out every one.

Then I said to myself, "OK. I've got to put this online," so I did a video of one of the rescue tours. It was a good video, but training videos and the word training sort of sucks. If I told you, Ben, I was going to put you online to do training videos for an hour, you'd probably be mad at me before you even saw it, just because the word sucks and the perception of it is so terrible.

PASSION THROUGH THE YEARS

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a passionate love affair
with Romeo y Julieta cigars.

Building on the success of
Romeo by Romeo y Julieta,
the new Anejo features
a ***stalk-cut*** dark
Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper,
complimented by
double fermented
2008 ***vintage tobaccos***.

Anejo is a rich and robust cigar
with undernotes of dark chocolate
and coffee for a memorable smoke

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A passion though the years.

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SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Tobacco Use Increases The Risk Of Infertility, Stillbirth, And Low Birth Weight.

I wanted to reinvent training, so I went into production and I spent almost $2 million, threw [the program] away five times, and then came up with something that was really significant. I called it Taffer Virtual Teaching.

While I was developing TVT, I realized as at the time president of NCB, knowing so many bar operators, that 80 percent of them don't have P&Ls or any financial information to help them, so I created a free app called BarHQ. I spent a fortune on that.

BarHQ has 80 promotions in it. You push a button, the promotion comes down, you pick the graphics, you pick the dates, it goes to your social media pages, it goes to your employees' social media pages. It's a pretty amazing program, it does all your scheduling, all your employees, all your revenue tracking, all of these things, and it's completely free.

Between BarHQ and Taffer Virtual Tteaching, I'm trying to help the industry that I love for free, or for pennies. I'm really into it, guys. It's an amazing way for me to help people in another place that I'll never get a chance to go to.

C&S: When you get mad on the show, is that an act, or is that really your reaction?

JT: When you start to hurt people's lives, put people in danger or otherwise impact people in a way that reaches past the four walls of the business that's where I start to get upset. The thought that I could send somebody's child into a building where they trust you, and you make them sick, is unfathomable to me. I'm livid when that stuff happens. That's really genuine, especially when I know they know better. There's a lot of single moms in our business because they can work days, nights, flexible hours, half-shifts, things like that. I don't like it when they're disrespected. It really fricking bothers me...when people allow their employees and customers to get sick, that stuff is just uncontrollable to me. That's when I start throwing things and going nuts, and I think it's justified.

C&S: Absolutely, totally agree there. Now, I want step outside the realm of bars and spirits for a second, I hear you're quite the cigar connoisseur?

JT: I am. My father used to smoke Romeo and Juliets (sic) when I was a kid. Of course, when I was a kid, they were illegal as hell to bring them in from Cuba. He had a guy in New York who would ship him the cigars and – this was even pre FedEx – he would get the labels in the mail a few days later in a separate envelope, the bands.

He'd go back into the cigar box and he'd put the bands on every single one because he was so proud of them. When I was about 10 years old – I love my father – I went to his humidor and I pulled out one of his Churchills. I went out in the bushes in front of my house and started puffing it.

He caught me, and he was really a little angry at me. Sometimes he'd cut his Churchills in half, and he was a little angry at me, so he said, "You want to smoke a cigar? Let's smoke a cigar." He sat me down, he pulled out a nice big Churchill, lit it up well for me, put it in my hand and commenced to sit there and puff with me until I got incredibly sick.

C&S: That's not a good start [laughing]

JT: [Laughing] That's how he ensured that I'd never hit his humidor again, but he was wrong. Once I hit 16 I hit that humidor pretty often. I've always loved cigars, guys. I love the taste of cigars. Over the years I've forgotten some of the ones that I've enjoyed. Years ago, I used to get hooked on cognac cigars, which I really thought were wonderful.

All types of flavored cigars, actually, were really fun to me, and then of course, traditional cigars, Cubans...I like heavier cigars, and when I don't have a real cigar in my hand...I have an e-cigar in my hand. There's one in my hand right now, because I can't puff a real one around here.

C&S: You recently got started with an e-cigar company, correct?

JT: I did, and I love it. This is, I think, a great time for cigars.

C&S: Absolutely, especially with talks of Cuba opening up, we believe we'll see another cigar boom coming up, similar to what we had in the '90s.

JT: I totally think so. There's so much fun stuff out there. Dare I say, stepping out of the box a little bit, but the Flathead I think is a lot of fun. I like the fact that great traditional cigar-making is now being looked at almost as craft beer and craft whiskey is. That, to me, is really exciting.

Don't get me wrong, I love the big guys, but I think we're at the edge of something that could be really terrific in the next few years. That's what I find exciting.

C&S: Agreed, there's a lot of great small batch cigars coming out these days. I love that you brought up craft beer and craft whiskey. What are your thoughts on the current craft beer and craft bourbon scenes?

JT: It's interesting. I got a little pressure from the craft brewers association because I made a comment the other day and I wasn't being exact, I was being approximate. I believe in the next few years that approximately 50 percent of these craft brew companies are going to disappear.

What's happened is, the investment in craft beer has become more about financial investment than the passion of making beer. Because of that, there's a bunch of them that just aren't that good. People try them because it's a hip brand, or a local brand, but eventually they abandon the brand because at the end of the day they don't love it, even though they want to really bad.

In the distilling world, these are more sophisticated licenses, long return processes. You're aging bourbon, you're not brewing it and putting it right in the bottle or the keg and then selling it. You've got to age it. It has to be aged just right in the right oak barrels, it's very much a labor of love.

RATED 93 TOP 10 BOUTIQUE CIGARS OF 2015 CIGAR & SPIRITS

RATED 92 #9 - TOP 25 CIGARS OF 2015 Cigar Journal

RATED 91 Cigar Snob

THE PERFECT PAIR

At Sindicato, we're on a constant search to find perfection. That's why we have industry greats, Eduardo Fernandez and Arsenio Ramos, along with Alberto and Alejandro Turrent, blending, crafting, and growing tobacco for our finest cigars. They are the two perfect pairs that have crafted our perfect pair – Sindicato Natural and Sindicato Maduro.

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"These small batch bourbons are really exciting. Start to pair them with some of these specialty cigars and it's almost like pairing a fine wine with a fine dinner when we start to match bourbon to cigars. That's what I find exciting. I think the pairing of the two is something that people should really start to look at."

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Riding over the western plains, loyal to the people, and courageous in his cause, Pancho Villa left a legendary imprint on history. Reflecting the spirit of this revolutionary hero, Pancho Villa cigars are handcrafted with a daring double liga of ligeros and premium-select Cuban-seed long fillers. The result is an impressionable robust taste, rich aroma and a memorable cigar experience.

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These small batch bourbons are really exciting. Start to pair them with some of these specialty cigars and it's almost like pairing a fine wine with a fine dinner when we start to match bourbon to cigars. That's what I find exciting. I think the pairing of the two is something that people should really start to look at.

If I was a cigar company I'd start to think about, "Who do I pair with?" I'd really start to look at those things, just like wines do when looking for what foods they would pair with.

C&S: Absolutely! How often do you enjoy, let's say a cocktail or a cigar?

JT: I had an Ashton on Sunday...I don't drink that often. I work 12 hours a day on set, and drinking slows me down. I don't drink very much during the course of the week. I got to tell you though, I will puff on a cigar while I'm on set even though I can't drink.

C&S: Fantastic. Something that I've ben hearing more about lately is the emergence of the "mocktail." Mixologists are now going through a lot of their alcoholic creations and making them non-alcoholic. What are your thoughts on that?

JT: Years ago, that was almost a negative thing, "I'm going to have a virgin cocktail." Today, if we eliminate the word virgin cocktail and start to call them house punches, house beverages, give them culinary authenticity or credibility, I think it's exciting. I'm working on a place now in South Carolina. We're working on trying to create a Carolina punch, which is a non alcoholic, really special punch that you can have with lunch and dinner – non alcoholic. There's huge opportunity in that, and let me tell you why. This is where my industry sometimes is so fricking wrong it's absurd.

Listen to this. Out of six people going into lunch will order an alcoholic beverage, six out of seven will order a soft drink. We as an industry, we target the one out of six. I can sell him a cocktail, I can upgrade him, but we don't have the opportunity to upsell the other five of the six.

The whole fucking thing is backwards. Years ago, I said, "You know what? Let's target the five out of the six that are drinking soft drinks, and let's try to make some money." We put in what we call the premium soft drink program. I did this for a major alcohol chain, and we increased non alcoholic beverage sales during lunch and dinner by 70 percent by understanding that iced tea is the fricking enemy, and let's put together a non alcoholic program that's as good as our alcoholic program.

I think programs like that are solid, but you have to present them correctly from a verbal standpoint. Nobody's going to say, "Let me have a virgin _____." If they're going to do it, they have to do it with the right terminology so it's hip when you order it.

C&S: I love the insight into that, thank you. Anything else that you'd like to point out?

JT: On Taffer Virtual Training, or TVT on **jontaffer.com** I believe it's the most incredible product ever developed...What I wanted to do is reinvent teaching, and I did. It teaches you how to make money, but every minute, you're looking forward to the next minute, because it's freaking funny. What we did is took the boring type of information that everybody has to learn and matched it up with animations and a humorous approach. The end result is you will learn more in an hour than you've ever learned, and smile every minute of it. I'm really proud of it.

C&S: Jon, thank you so much for your time, we really appreciate it.

JT: Awesome, brother, thank you.

For more information on Taffer Virtual Training, Bar Rescue, or Bar-HQ visit www.jontaffer.com

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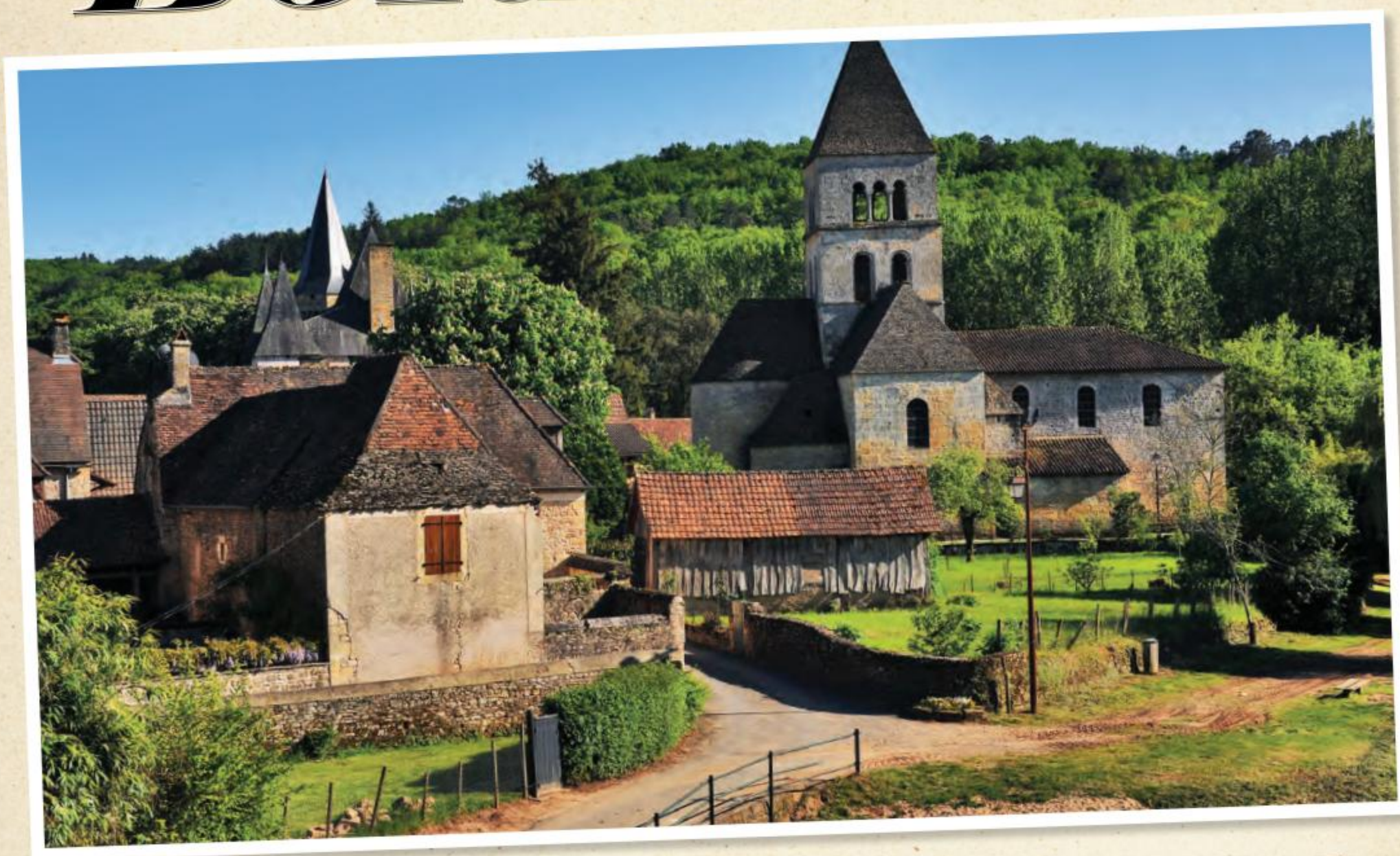
BEST OF BORDEAUX



A GUIDE TO SIPPING THROUGH ONE OF FRANCE'S MOST LAUDED WINE REGIONS

LOCATED IN THE SOUTHWEST, France's Bordeaux wine region is a big deal—possibly only rivaled by Champagne and Napa in the world of fabulous wine destinations. With 57 appellations comprising of over 9,000 wineries on nearly 300,000 acres of vineyards, it's an even bigger deal to conquer in a lifetime—much less a holiday.

Barreling down the center of it is the Garonne River. This divides the wine region into Left Bank, home to those fabled wineries with expensive, collectible wines, and the Right Bank, wines not nearly as famous, yet in some cases, can match Left Bank reds in price and quality.

By Lanee Lee

Excellence Unearthed

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Handcrafted from an exotic blend of Piloto Cubano ligero, Criollo 98 ligero, and vintage Seco, Hidden Treasure is bound with distinctive Nicaraguan leaves contained within a Viso Cuban Binder. The result is a cigar of rich aroma, sweeping creamy texture and medium spicy tones.

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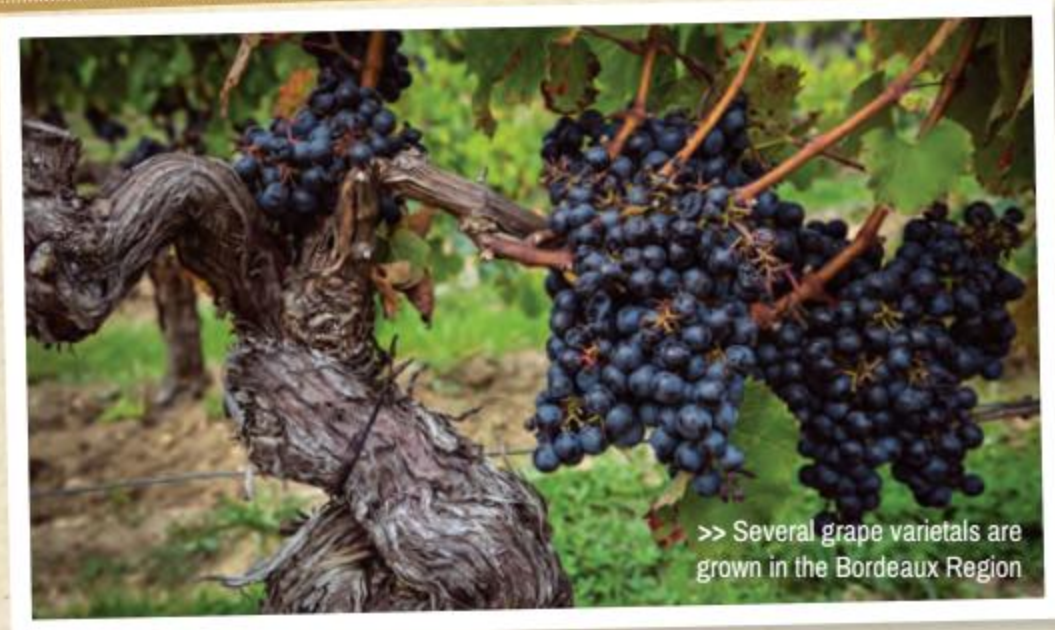
>>This beautiful region has over
300,000 acres of vineyards

WITH SO MUCH TO EXPLORE, FOLLOW THIS GUIDE TO BORDEAUX'S APPELLATIONS BASED ON WHAT TYPE OF WINE YOU LIKE TO DRINK:



>> Several grape varietals are grown in the Bordeaux Region

IF YOU LIKE MERLOT BLENDS...

Located on the Right Bank, two of the most esteemed Merlot-blend producing appellations are **St-Émilion** and **Pomerol**. Predominantly, Merlot and Cabernet Franc grapes are utilized in winemaking here. For an excellent sampling of wines from the area, visit **Maison du Vin de Saint-Émilion**, a wine school in the medieval city of St-Émilion, for wine tastings. Or, head straight to the sources at some of the Right Bank's most prestigious wineries, such as **Château Cheval Blanc** (sporting an $18.5 million cellar), **Château Angélus** and **Pétrus** in Pomerol.

IF YOU LIKE CABERNET SAUVIGNON BLENDS...

Home to all but one of the first growth wineries and all of the **Cru Bourgeois**, the Medoc is Bordeaux's 'celebrity' wine region due to its prestigious chateaux. First growth or Premier Crus are some of the world's most coveted and costly wines, such as wines from **Chateau Lafite Rothschild**, **Chateau Latour** and **Chateau Haut Brion**.

Within Medoc, there are eight appellations. If you're short on time, focus in on visiting Margaux St. Julien, Pauillac, St. Estephe and the Haut Medoc appellations.

Hot tip: Best to hire a guide with connections in order to get access to those esteemed wineries, such as Bespoke Bordeaux tours, run by Alexander Hall—a highly knowledgeable Brit that knows the wine region as well as any Bordelaise. And most wineries are not one right after another, as in Napa. Just one more reason to hire a guide—being the designated driver in Bordeaux wine country is never ideal.

IF YOU LIKE DRY WHITE WINES, SUCH AS SAUVIGNON BLANC...

Although red wines outnumber white by roughly 10 to one, Bordeaux's white wines, including its sweet white wines, are gaining in prestige and popularity. The four appellations that produce a majority of these lesser known, yet no less exceptional, dry white wines include **Bordeaux Blanc**, Entre-Deux-Mers, **Graves** and **Pessac-Léognan**. Wines from these regions are made predominately from Sauvignon Blanc grapes with Sémillon added for substance and character and sometimes Muscadelle for aroma on the nose. White Bordeaux wines aren't especially aromatic, as a California Chardonnay, however—they are elegant and refined.

In general, whites from the **Entre-Deux-Mers** region are aged in stainless steel, uncomplicated sippers and should be consumed within a year or two of release, such as **Chateau Sainte Marie**—don't miss their **Vieilles Vignes 2013**.

The more expensive whites, ideal for aging and wine cellar collecting, are usually from the **Pessac-Léognan** region, such as **La Clarté de Haut-Brion Pessac-Léognan 2010** or **Les Hauts de Smith Pessac-Léognan 2011**.

IF YOU LIKE DESSERT WHITE WINES...

Sauternes and **Barsac**, Bordeaux's primary appellations of the golden elixirs, are wonderful to visit to learn an entirely different approach to winemaking. For instance, the same grapes are used to make sweet wine as in dry white Bordeaux, however, the best grapes that result in those intensely concentrated flavors are those with 'noble rot'— a fungus (Botrytis cinerea) that attacks ripe grapes and causes an increase in their sugar content. The most famous dessert wine maker in Bordeaux is **Château d'Yquem**—the only Sauternes with a first growth classification. If in Barsac, **Château Doisy-Daëne** is a must-stop as one of the region's stalwart producers of outstanding dessert wines since the 1920s. Their 2013 dessert wine is served at the French embassy in Washington D.C.

BORDEAUX GUIDE 101

Here are few things to know before you go; from best months to visit, to special events worthy of making a special trip, and the best Bordeaux vacations:

SCHOOL IS COOL

Because the appellation d'origine controlee (AOC)—French wine designation based on the concept of terroir— is pretty complex in the region, take a two-hour to two-day class at **Bordeaux Wine School** in the city of Bordeaux before heading out to the vineyards. And what's not to love about a lesson that includes wine tasting?

WINE N' DINE

What the French wine regions, including Bordeaux, offer which is unique are private dining options in prestigious wine estates. Not a restaurant per se, just an opportunity to have an intimate dinner for you and your friends prepared by a talented private chef and pairings of the estate's rare wines. Reserve well in advance if you decide to go this route—roughly a month or so. Although it requires more planning, here are three that are well worth the extra effort—especially if you're an epicurean that enjoys learning the intricacies of wine pairings with a variety of dishes:

Château Haut Bailly, Pessac-Léognan
They have their own in-house chef and can cater for small intimate groups in the château or larger groups in their reception room. **www.chateau-haut-bailly.com**

Château Phelan Segur, Saint Estephe, Medoc
The in-house chef works closely with the restaurants owned by the same family: Le Taillevent in Paris and Les Crayeres in Reims. **www.phelansegur.com**

Château La Lagune, Haut Medoc, Medoc
Dinner is served in an ornate vaulted kitchen. Guests can also stay in the château—a rare offering in France.
www.chateau-lalagune.com

WINE TIME

Timing is everything. Weeks or months to avoid when most wineries are closed include: January, it's cold and many are in blending season; the first week of April when wineries see only wine industry or VIP clients; and August, when the entire country goes on holiday. If you plan to visit on the weekend, make sure to call ahead to verify weekend hours—many are completely shuttered on Sundays. Due to the pleasant weather and new bud growth on the vines, May and June are ideal months to visit for both the sunny days and stunning photo opportunities.

WINE EVENTS

Two events worth making the trip for:

World's Largest Wine Museum Opens
Spread over ten floors, La Cité du Vin museum will be like Spain's Guggenheim or Sydney's opera house—an architectural wonder in the city of Bordeaux. Like a colossal, golden decanter rising from the banks of the Garonne River, the 'wine city' is geared for visitors of all ages to discover the history of the world's wines and its influence in shaping civilizations, dating back to 7,000 B.C. Slated to open in June 2016.

Wine Marathon
Both a costume party and an athletic feat of 'dining and dashing', Le Marathon du Medoc is playfully known as the World's Longest Marathon. The route passes by 59 of the Medoc region's most beloved wineries with 18 wine stops that include plenty of sustenence such as cheese, oysters, steak and sausage. This year's race is September 10.

Photo Courtesy of Ed naya / Shutterstock.com

>> A traditional bar in old Bordeaux City

LUXURY BORDEAUX HOLIDAYS

Don't have the time to plan a trip on your own? Here are three unforgettable trips, from biking to boating through Bordeaux:

Cox & Kings: Breathtaking Bordeaux

On this completely bespoke, privately guided trip with Cox & Kings, you'll visit Grand Cru Class wine estates, explore the Cognac region and sample its famous brandy, and sample fresh oysters from the waters of Arcachon Bay.

11 days & 10 nights
From $4,720 per person

Viking River Cruises: Chateaux, Rivers and Wine

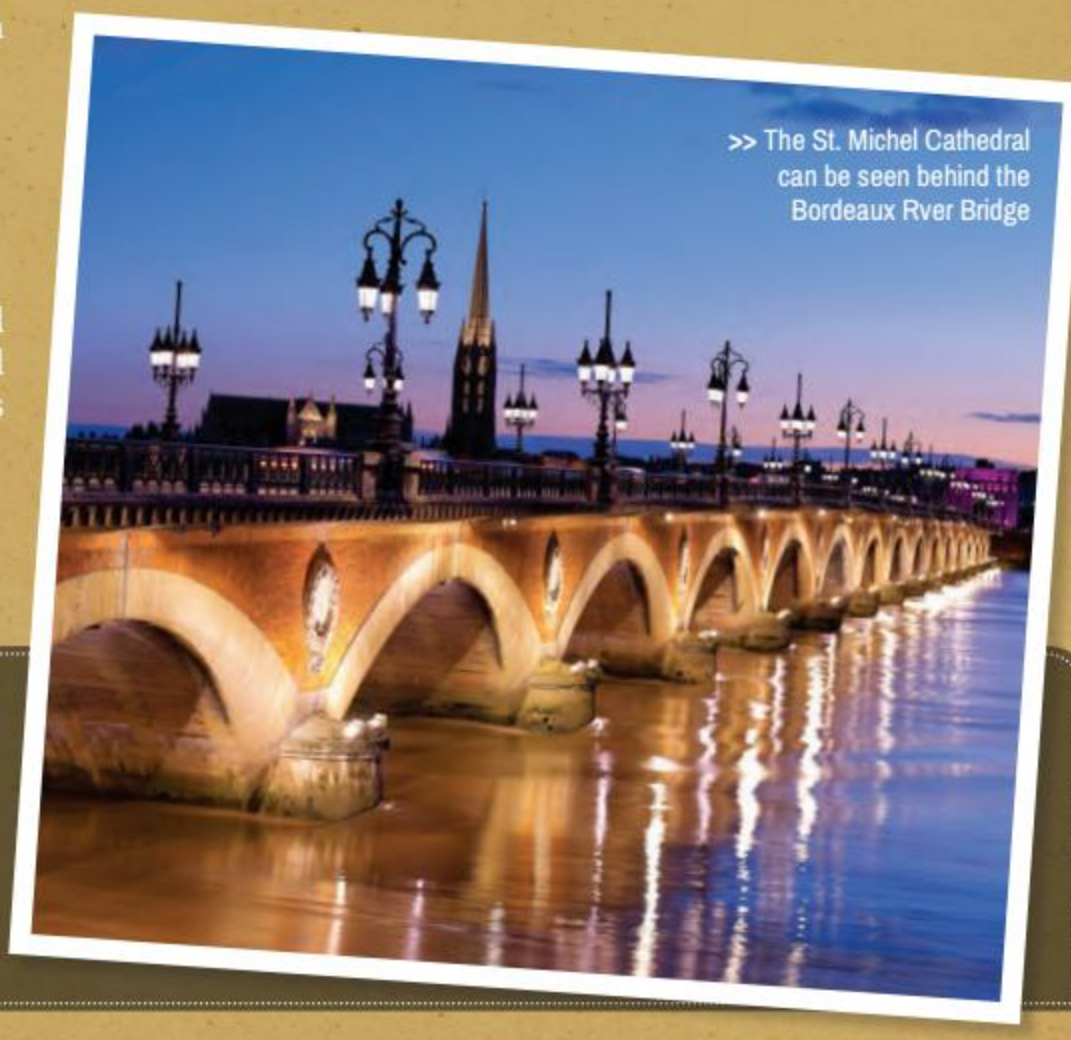
Sail down the Dordogne, Garonne and Gironde Rivers aboard an elegant small ship with stops along the way to explore famed wine regions. At night, you feast on finely prepared dinners paired with exquisite Bordeaux wines via a master sommelier.

8 Days / 7 Days
From $2,699 per person

DuVine: Bordeaux Bike Tour

Cycle amongst endless acres of vineyards from the Dordogne to the Gironde River while tasting fine vintages from the region's premier wineries. Every night ends with a stay at a regal châteaux with a decadent (and well-deserved) meal.

6 Days / 5 Nights
From $4995 per person



>> The St. Michel Cathedral can be seen behind the Bordeaux Rver Bridge

Fact Checking Sources:
Alexander Hall- Bordeaux wine educator/tour guide
alexander.hall@bespokebordeaux.com

Benjamin Bourinat - Public Relations US Contact for Bordeaux wine tourism *Benjamin.bourinat@sopexa.com.*

FEATURED SPIRITS RATED....

90
Cigar & Spirits
RATING

BLACK MAPLE HILL OREGON RYE

Black Maple Hill Oregon Rye is micro-distilled in small batches from the finest locally grown grains and using high mountain glacier water. Aged 4-5 years in new heavily charred American White Oak barrels, this bourbon features a mash bill of 75% Rye and 25% corn for a rich flavor that is unmistakably rye.

ABV: 47.5% MSRP: $75

93
Cigar & Spirits
RATING

BLACK MAPLE HILL OREGON BOURBON

Black Maple Hill Oregon Bourbon is micro-distilled in small batches from the finest locally grown grains and using high mountain glacier water. Aged 4-5 years in new heavily charred American White Oak barrels, this bourbon features a mash bill of 75% corn and 25% barley for a smooth, sweet taste with an oak finish.

ABV: 47.5% MSRP: $75

Discover Our Secrets

A cigar utilizing the same caliber of excellence as the history it represents

TOP 10
BOUTIQUE CIGARS OF 2015
CIGAR & SPIRITS
MAGAZINE

HIRAM & SOLOMON
CIGARS

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JAMES MACARTHUR BUNNAHABHAIN, 5-YEAR SINGLE MALT SCOTCH

This Classic Islay distiller has produced exceptional whisky since 1881. This limited bottling of 400 bottles was chosen because it possesses the qualities which have made the distillery famous. It is soft, creamy, nutty and clean with a touch of sea air and peat.

ABV: 45% MSRP: $59

RON DEL BARRILITO 2 STARS

Aged for a minimum of three years in charred oak barrels, this Puerto Rican rum is a light amber color and light bodied. Featuring a smooth aroma and mellow flavor, it's rum that can be enjoyed neat and is equally suitable for mixing cocktails.

ABV: 43% MSRP: $29

KOVAL WHISKEY

Distilled from Millet, and aged in new American Oak from Minnesota, Koval is the first whiskey to be made out of millet using only the "heart cut" of the distillate. The grains are sourced from a local organic farmer in collective in the Midwest. Single Barrel and unfiltered, the flavor profile of Koval features nuts and vanilla with a bright finish.

ABV: 40% MSRP: $45

JAMES MACARTHUR 6-YEAR ISLAY SINGLE MALT SCOTCH

On the nose, it is sweet with pungent hints of smoke and peat. On the palate, the promise is fulfilled with rich layers of peat expressed in a soft and lush finish.

ABV: 45% MSRP: $95

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RON DEL BARRILITO 3 STARS

This Puerto Rican Rum is a special blend of rums aged 6-10 years, it is aged in charred oak barrels resulting in a golden amber color. Smooth and mellow, the flavors are rich and complex behind a full bodied spirit.

ABV: 43% MSRP: $34

88 Cigar & Spirits RATING

SANTA TERESA RUM

This flagship sipping rum is produced in Venezuela using the Solera method. Amber red in color, it offers a fruity aroma on the nose with notes of honey and dark chocolate. On the palate, it is silky smooth with flavors of toasted wood, leather, tobacco and a hint of raw sugar.

ABV: 40% MSRP: $50

92 Cigar & Spirits RATING

RHUM J.M. VSOP

Distilled from sugarcane at the foot of volcano Mt. Pelée, the sugarcane is pressed within 1 hour after harvesting to create a remarkably smooth and full-flavored Rhum Agricole. Aged 3 years in re-charred bourbon barrels and then another year in new American Oak casks helps to achieve is mahogany color. Nougat and cinnamon and clove on the nose, followed by spiced butter, lemon, and toffee.

ABV: 43% MSRP: $59

93 Cigar & Spirits RATING

MEZCAL VAGO

Mezcal Vago Elote has a nose full of smoky toasted corn and dry river stones. The body is wood tones with layers of honeycomb, green tropical fruit, and smoke. The finish is long and loaded with mint and papaya.

ABV: 50%-52% MSRP: $55

90 Cigar & Spirits RATING

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and are enclosed at the foot to lock-in their premium tobacco
filler freshness along with their distinct flavor and aroma.

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HHB

GOLD & CLASSIC

SQUARE ONE BERGAMOT ORANGE FLAVORED ORGANIC VODKA

Clear, with a slight haze from the unfiltered essential oils that go into this spirit distilled from 100% Organic American Rye. The aroma is freshly peeled oranges with a subtle green wild flower. The palate, floral bergamot is wrapped in juicy tangerine rounded by a pleasant mandarin orange bitterness. The finish is warm with hints of ginger and juniper.

ABV: 40% MSRP: $35

89 Cigar & Spirits RATING

LOS AMANTES AÑEJO MEZCAL

Twice distilled from Espadín agave hearts and then aged for up to 2 years in new French and American Oak barrels. The tones of this Mezcal are very aromatic, with complex wood scents alongside vanilla, coffee, and caramel. The taste is round with balanced wood notes, dried fig, prunes with a slightly smoky finish.

ABV: 40% MSRP: $69.99

91 Cigar & Spirits RATING

KARLSSON'S GOLD VODKA

Full bodied and full of character, this vodka is single-distilled in a copper-lined column still, from a blend of heirloom potatoes. It's unfiltered, and is best enjoyed straight and alongside your favorite culinary dish. The skinless potatoes that Karlsson's Gold are distilled from are so pure that they require only a single distillation. Any further distillations would strip the flavor and complexity from the vodka.

ABV: 40% MSRP: $29.99

85 Cigar & Spirits RATING

SQUARE ONE CUCUMBER FLAVORED ORGANIC VODKA

Organic Rye Grain Neutral Spirits (ORGNS) is derived from a single, four-column continuous distillation. The final distillate is passed through a micron paper filter. Cucumbers are individually distilled using ORGNS and water-based distillates ORGNS, Rocky Mountain Aquifer water and cucumber essences are then combined together to create Square One Cucumber. The spirits is cucumber forward with unique aromatics throughout.

ABV: 40% MSRP: $35

92 Cigar & Spirits RATING

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THE GENTLEMAN'S LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

BARREL AGED ROYALTY

BY: JULIE HARRINGTON GIFFIN

IF an American Dynasty were to exist in the spirit world, bourbon would sit atop the royal hierarchy. Other spirits may claim the noble granting of an "Honorary Knighthood" so to speak, but only bourbon would be appointed to the highest royal order by birthright. King Bourbon has a rather stately ring to it, don't you think?

Bourbon's royalty is deeply rooted in American history. Its heritage gives way to the privileged distinction of being named "America's Native Spirit" as declared by congress on May 4, 1964. The actual account of the provenance of our native spirit is deficient in historic documents but European settlers of Colonial America along the Eastern Seaboard brought their knowledge of alcohol production. It wasn't until the late 1700's that decedent's of the early settlers made their way to Kentucky and began harvesting corn. The production of corn was seen as a valuable commodity. As an endemic grain, it was easily cultivated, provided food, and provided an opportunity for economic advancement as a distilled spirit.

Proclamations as to the founding father of bourbon will forever be shadowed by unfounded legends. Popular tales assert Reverend Elijah Craig with this dubious honor, and yet others say it was just his accidental discovery of using charred barrels. In reality, there were many distillers experimenting in the production of bourbon at the time and most likely, the sharing of production ideas ultimately led to the great spirit we enjoy today. To proclaim just one father of bourbon however, may forever remain buried at the bottom of century old barrels-but not everything about America's native spirit was lost with the angels share.

> "BOURBON'S ROYALTY IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN AMERICAN HISTORY?"

Credible folklore tells us that early distillers in Old Bourbon County Kentucky, exported their distinct whiskey in barrels labeled "Bourbon," thus establishing its name after Bourbon County. Another credible source, Kentucky Historian Michael Veach, contends the name came from Bourbon Street in New Orleans, which became a major port for selling Kentucky Whiskey. The truth? Perhaps it still drifts among the waters connecting Bourbon County and New Orleans. Bourbon Street, an established entertainment destination, was also the landing for the bourbon labeled barrels shipped down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Old Bourbon County. Over time, locals and visitors alike began requesting the popular barreled spirit that eventually became known as Bourbon Whiskey.

>> The Jim Beam Distillery is one of seven distilleries along the Kentucky Bourbon Trail.

LAYERS OF LIMESTONE

Kentucky's landscape is abundant with limestone layers that act as natural filters producing premium, fresh spring water. The water is ideal for cooking the starches into fermentable sugars creating the mash for fermentation. Not to digress, but I would be remiss if I didn't mention James Crow in the context of mash, or "sour-mash" to be exact. James Crow, a Scotsman and well-educated man in science and medicine, was a distiller in Kentucky during the mid 1800's. He experimented in controlling the consistency of the mash and began by using portions of the previous mash to produce the next. This along with using predominantly corn grain and aging exclusively in charred barrels gained him recognition for his exceptional bourbon. It would be fair to say that James Crow is the father of "sour-mash" that today, is the preferred method in producing straight bourbon.

Bourbon is more to the Bluegrass state than just big business. It is an iconic footprint that tells the story of their great history. To experience this proud heritage, the **Kentucky Bourbon Trail**, founded less than 20 years ago, is a roadmap offering 9 distillery tours for visitors to explore a behind-the-scenes look at the art of bourbon production. Taking your bourbon experience one step further, the Kentucky Bourbon Trail Craft Tour opens the doors to micro-distilleries with more recent productions of small batch bourbons. Collectively, 19 distilleries makeup the complete passport for both tours.

“IF I CANNOT DRINK BOURBON AND SMOKE CIGARS IN HEAVEN THEN I SHALL NOT GO”

-MARK TWAIN

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

If a pilgrimage through the limestone landscape of bourbon country eludes your future adventures, a journey exploring over 300 bourbons awaits you in the heart of Los Angeles at **Seven Grand Whiskey Bar.**

Seven Grand is a stand out among whiskey enthusiasts, housing the most opulent collection of whiskey this side of Kentucky. General Manager and Director of Single Spirit Bars for all of 213 Hospitality, Andrew Abrahamson recently gave me a few moments to share some insight into the intrigue of Seven Grand and how it became an iconic destination.

AA:“The concept was always to be a Whiskey Bar, dedicated to getting as deep into the history and love of the Spirit as possible. Throughout the last nine years, there has been an immense amount of evolution that has come through the people that have drank here and loved the bar as much as we do, but that kernel was always there. The concept was originally sparked when Cedd (the owner) noticed a keen trend in his bar down the street, the Golden Gopher, in Whiskey sales progressively going up and up. Growing up in Virginia, Whiskey was always a part of his life and his family, where he spent summers mixing his Grandmother’s Mint Juleps for her. After a trip to Ireland, the roots of the concept were planted, and in May of 2007, we opened shop in Downtown LA. I think all of that history, research, passion and flat out love of Whiskey has spread throughout every person that has ever worked here, and is felt by our customers. It’s a simple thing, but very hard to have and be able to keep alive as people come and go. Seven Grand’s magic is that Whiskey has always been a love, and never a business.”

C&S: In regards to bourbon, how many make up the list at Seven Grand and which is your most prized possession?

AA:“Speaking specifically to Bourbon, we’re sitting at around 300, while our overall list of offerings is over 700. Most prized to me? The one in my glass I am about to drink. Last night it was Ancient Age (a bottling from the 60’s, but I love the current one just as much).”

C&S: Exploring your International Wall of Whiskey, what qualifies for inclusion in this collection?

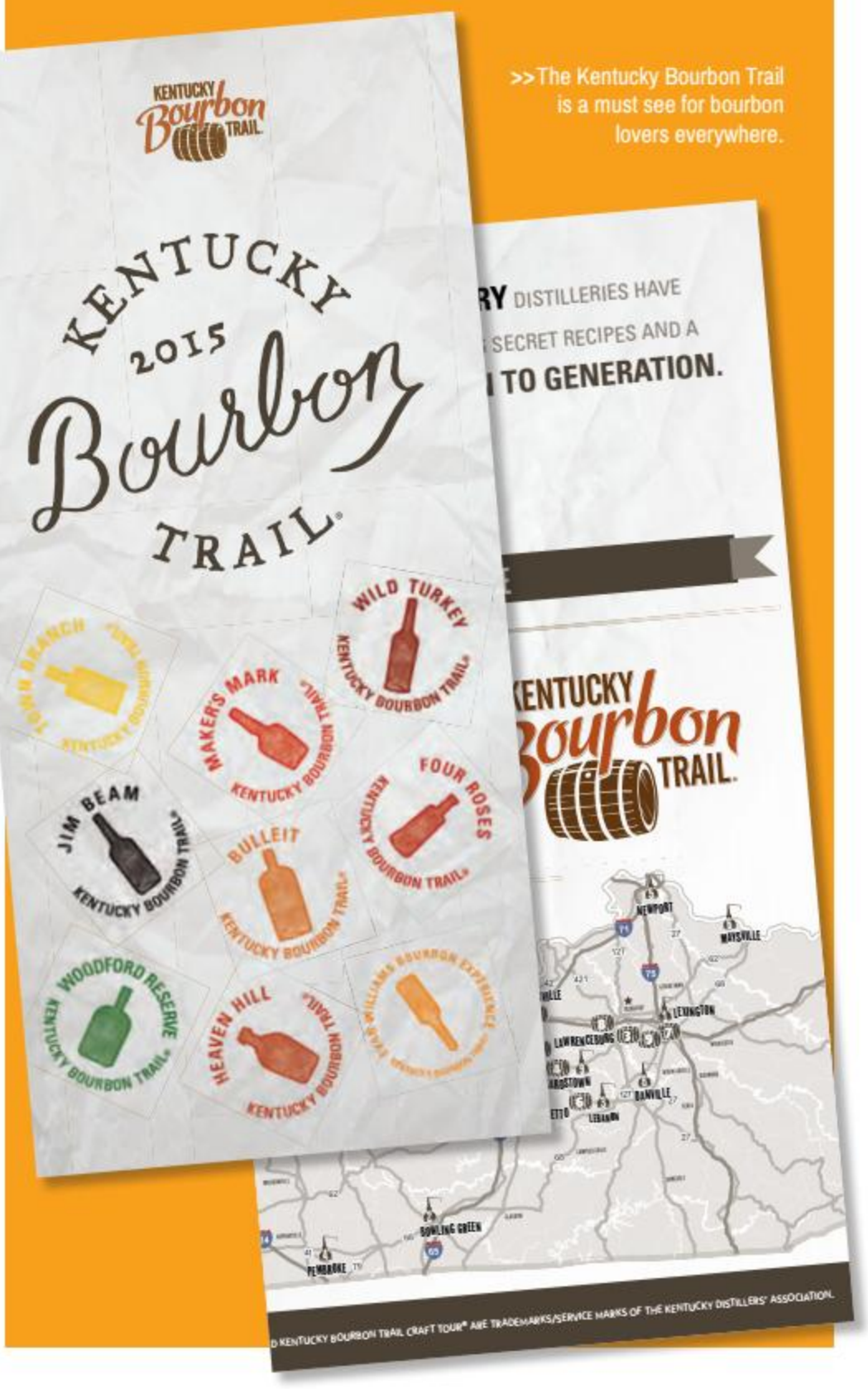
AA:“Everything we can get our hands on that is worth drinking. Irish, Scotch, Canadian and Japanese withstanding as already firmly rooted “International” Whiskies, we have English, Welsh, Taiwanese, Australian (Tasmanian), Swedish, Dutch, Belgian...the list just keeps growing. I’ve heard there is a Mexican Whiskey being made right now that is quite good. I can’t wait to try it.”

C&S: Seven Grand’s “Whiskey Society” is an awesome opportunity to learn about old, new, and even rare whiskies and their unique production process. What can you tell us about these tastings?

AA:“We meet nearly weekly on Mondays. Life happens and things come up, which can postpone events, but we gather and invite Brand Ambassadors and Master Distillers and Blenders in to taste of through their line and do comparative tastings. We have done over 250 events to date, and are very proud that this group meets to really learn about the Spirit instead of making it a high end social gathering. It’s all about the education and expansion of everyone’s palates and experiences. “

C&S: Your famed Old Fashioned cocktail has attributed to putting Seven Grand on the map with a staggering 75,000 plus served each year. What is it about this particular recipe that has become the iconic drink at Seven Grand?

AA:“It is the perfect cocktail. In fact it is the original cocktail. Back upon its inception, to order a cocktail would be to get an Old Fashioned. Spirit, Sugar, Bitters, Water. Through time, the word began referring to “mixed drinks” that ran the



>>The Kentucky Bourbon Trail is a must see for bourbon lovers everywhere.

spectrum, but the key ingredient of Bitters has always been specific to the Cocktail, and more specifically the Old Fashioned Cocktail. When the options became too vast when ordering a Cocktail, those who wanted the original started ordering an Old Fashioned Cocktail, following that original recipe. We love it here because the star of the show is the Whiskey. If you want a modification, all you need to do is change the Whiskey you use. It never hides behind other flavors. It's rich and boozy, but also has a refreshing quality with the ice and zests and is long enough to enjoy while socializing. I think it's the perfect way to start your night. No one likes getting bogged down with menus of dozens and dozens of cocktails and choices. You are at a bar to hang out and have fun with friends, new and old. Walking into Seven Grand, you can order an Old Fashioned right off the bat, get the best one available anywhere, and begin enjoying the night and having a great time. Greatness only found through simplicity."

If there exists a bourbon trail in Los Angeles it can be found under one roof at Seven Grand Whiskey Bar. With over 700 menu items to choose from, you should plan on staying awhile. A visit on National Bourbon Day (June 14th) or during National Bourbon Heritage Month (September) seems apropos. Order a flight, enjoy a cigar, live music and relax. Can't make it to LA? Then I'll bring the flavor of Seven Grand to you as Andrew Abrahamson has so graciously shared the recipe for their famed Old Fashioned.

And with that, my bottle of 18-year-old bourbon beckons an Old Fashioned love affair, so to speak. Quite honestly, I can't think of a more intoxicating note to end our literary journey through Barrel Aged Royalty.

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Lemon and Orange Zest

Pestle the Sugar and Bitters. Add the Whiskey. Stir (with very cold, large ice) just enough to mix the two. 15 seconds should be on the money. You want the drink to start a touch stronger than most, as it does melt and dilute down and can quickly go from good to poor if the first sip is already at optimal dilution.

Zest with a peel of lemon and orange and go to town.

Cheers!

READY TO RUN

GREAT THOROUGHBRED RACEHORSES DON'T HAPPEN BY CHANCE. YEARS OF RESEARCH, CAREFUL TRAINING AND ATTENTION TO MINUTE DETAIL ARE PART AND PARCEL OF WHAT IT TAKES TO BRING A HORSE TO THE TOP ECHELONS OF RACING.

BY SARAH E. COLEMAN

A Thoroughbred racehorse is truly a work of art. If you've ever been to the track and seen the horses pour on the speed as they turn for home, you can appreciate that these animals are carefully trained athletes at the peak of their careers.

But don't be fooled: Having a winning racehorse isn't just about luck; there is a true science behind every step in the process, from careful breeding to regimented exercise and everything in between.

The amount of analysis that goes into determining if a breeding selection between a mare and a stallion will be a lucrative one can put the R&D budgets of many companies to shame. Detailed research goes back multiple generations-not only is the athletic ability of each horse on the family tree analyzed, so is the skeletal structure (called conformation), which can offer clues as to which track surface and what distance race the potential foal might like.

On top of this, top-tier stallion owners have the right to refuse a breeding to any mare they don't feel would produce a genetically superior foal, showcasing the fact that there are plenty of hurdles to jump through before a colt or filly is ever foaled! Once the breeding has been decided upon (did we mention that the most expensive stallion stud fees can cost in upwards of $300,000?) and the mating complete, the mare carries the foal for the next 11 months ... assuming all goes as planned.

"DON'T BE FOOLED: HAVING A WINNING RACEHORSE ISN'T JUST ABOUT LUCK..."

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BABY

All Thoroughbreds are aged based on a calendar year, so they turn a year older every January 1 to make them more easily categorized by age for racing. Whether a foal is born in February or May, it's helpful to have the foal as close to the January 1 date as possible, this gives a slight advantage as it will have a few months more maturity when it enters training.

Most Thoroughbreds have their babies on their home farms; typically they only go to the equine hospital if there is an indication that there may be a complication during delivery. Once the mare foals (has her baby), the foal gets a once-over within 24 hours to check his vitals and overall health. A healthy foal will stand within one hour and nurse within two.

The foal and his mom are turned out in the pasture as much as possible to run and play. Only truly inclement weather keeps the foals inside; it's important that they spend time stretching to ensure they don't encounter limb issues from lack of use.

Over the next six months or so of a foal's life, he will be taught to lead, be brushed, and stand for the vet and farrier (person who trims his feet). He also may make his first trip off the farm to the breeding shed, where his mom will get bred again. Also during this time he will make the transition from drinking his mother's milk to solid equine feed and hay.

The journey a Thoroughbred takes on his way to becoming a true racehorse hinges on his development, both physically and mentally. While most animals are still considered "babies" as 2- and 3-year-olds, Thoroughbreds have been exposed to more things in 36 months than some animals ever are. The horses that run in the Derby are 3 years old, meaning they have only been racing for about a year prior to entering one of the biggest races of their lives.

WHAT A RACEHORSE LEARNS DURING HIS YEARLING YEAR

As the horse turns a year old, he will begin to learn his job: to run with a rider aboard. However, a horse must be taught a few things before he ever is asked to bear weight on his back. This includes getting the horse accustomed to the saddle, the tightening of the girth (the strap that holds the saddle in place) and the feel of a bridle on his head and the bit in his mouth. Once the horse has accepted these things (usually about a week), he is ready to learn how to carry a rider.

Most horses are taught what the weight of a human feels like in the stall. As the space is typically fairly small (think 12-feet by 12-feet), there is not a lot of room for the colt to work up a head of steam, if he is so inclined. Once he accepts a rider in the stall, he will start walking the shedrow, which is the covered walkway that runs near the stalls. From there, the horse graduates to a round pen (literally

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what it sounds like) or a small pasture to learn how to steer and listen to the rider (either asking him to slow down or move forward).

Once the horse understands these basic cues, he is typically either ridden in an open field or brought to a smaller training track, depending on where the horse is housed. Even now, the horse is not asked to run. The rider works on trotting (jogging) the horse and reinforcing what each rider cue mean (turning, stopping, moving left and right).

At this time, the young racehorse is exposed to the track pony, which will lead him to the gate when he races; though horses are rarely asked to break from the gate at speed before they are 2 years old. The gate can be scary; it can make startling noises as it opens and shuts, so it’s imperative that the young racehorse not be afraid of it.

During this phase of his training, he will learn to stand still while it is shut behind him, and to “break” from the gate when the gate opens, meaning he comes out straight right when the gate opens. This is done slowly and methodically so the horse is not afraid, beginning with simply walking through the gate with both front and rear doors open.

WHAT A RACEHORSE LEARNS DURING HIS 2-YEAR-OLD YEAR

Once the horse turns 2, assuming he has no physical or mental issues from his work thus far, he will begin training in earnest. Horses at this age are asked to pick up the pace of their track workouts, and to run with other horses on the track. Throughout his tenure on the track, the horse is being fed high-quality hay and grain, allowing his body to build muscle mass instead of fat. For the most part, racehorses in training live in a stall at all times, except when they’re on the track working or being hand-grazed by a groom. Racehorses are brushed daily (if not multiple times a day) and may have his legs bandaged every night. They truly are treated like kings.

Racehorses are brought to the track in the early morning, generally between the hours of 6 and 10 a.m. The horse goes to the track with an exercise rider or a jockey, and runs a pre-determined distance at a set speed, all established by the trainer and based on the horse’s health, training regimen, as well as what type of race he is hoping to enter the horse in next.

When a horse goes to the track and runs at a racing pace, this is called a “work” or a “breeze.” This tests the horse’s speed and fitness; his workout may be timed by the track’s official clocker. These times are allowed to be published in racing magazines (called a “published” or “recorded” work), and they can provide additional information to people who wish to bet on the race.

These works on the track also acclimate the racehorse to running in company, possibly being bumped or having dirt kicked up in their face. They also teach the racehorse to be moved to the rail by their jockey. A horse doesn’t work every day they are on the track; they typically run at a racing pace one day a week and are galloped (not worked) the other five days, with one day off a week.

Throughout their time on the track, the veterinary tools and therapeutic approaches these horses receive, which can include chiropractic, acupuncture and massage care (just to name a few) are designed to help them remain in top athletic condition.

THE STARS ALIGN

Sometimes it seems like nothing short of the stars aligning will get a horse to the Kentucky Derby. While a bit of luck doesn’t hurt, what matters more than luck is that the racehorse has a good foundation before entering training and that he also have an attentive, knowledgeable trainer who knows when to push and when to wait for a horse to mature.

A Kentucky transplant, Sarah Coleman got to the Bluegrass as quickly as she could, drawn by the equine industry and all that it entails. She has since become an avid fan of both bourbon and basketball.

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